GEORGE THE THIRD.

VOL. III.

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GEORGE THE THIRD.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Our lives, discolour'd with our present woes,
May still grow white and smile with happier hours.
So the pure limpid stream, when foul with stains
Of rushing torrents and descending rains,
Works itself clear, and as it runs, refines,
Till by degrees the floating mirror shines;
Reflects each flow'r that on the border grows,
And a new heav'n in its fair bosom shows.

CATO, Act I.

VOL. III.

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CHAP. XIX.

Thought requisite by the author.

IT happened that one evening Count De B. chose to take this duty himself, and gave me permission to go along with him. As the day shut in, and we walked together down the sands to the place, we observed that the sky was loaded with dark clouds, and, as our seamen say, looked angry; the ocean heaved with black and sullen waves, and the winds rose with portentous moans.

Scarcely had we reached the tower, and examined the arms of the guard lodged below, when the coming storm declared itself more decisively; and by the time we arrived at our post in the lantern, as we termed it, and had closed the door, all around was wrapped in premature night, and the elements were completely at war.

The edifice in which we were, was the work of ages long since passed away, and had been built by a society of monks, whose bones lay mouldering under the ruins of their convent a little higher up on the strand. It had indeed withstood time and tempest, but was visibly injured by the assaults of both, and now trembled at every blast.

I, as well as the count, had before experienced the terrors of a storm; but

we agreed that this exceeded all we had any idea of. The billows came swelling and rolling towards us, with a rapidity so terrific, that the soldiers, at the command of the count, with difficulty made their escape from beneath, and got upon the beach, just as the waters embraced the uppermost step of the entrance; and it was then too late for us to descend and join them; nor, had there been a boat at hand, could it have come near us: we were therefore obliged to trust to chance for our security: and as I saw that De B. was tranquil, I concealed my own emotions in the best manner I was able; not doubting, at the same time, that we should speedily be precipitated into the ocean, along with the tower, that now

almost nodded from the double shocks it received.

We had lighted four lamps, that hung from the ceiling; but in such circumstances this illumination could be of little utility to any ship in distress; and as to ourselves, it was of none; for it contrasted horribly with the thick darkness outside, and served only to mark the danger we were in to our men, who could not assist us.

Whilst I was engaged in trimming the lamps, my partner in this distress called to me, and pointed to the window which looked towards the sea; I turned, and saw the flash of a gun: three more followed instantaneously; and were evidently signals of a ship in extremity, driving before the gale and close in with the shore.

De B., whose presence of mind was admirable, recollected that in a recess at the lower part of our light-house there lay usually a large coil of strong rope; and it occurred to him, that if we could but get possession of this, it might serve both to further our own preservation, and perhaps assist the attempts of the vessel's crew to save themselves.

We accordingly each took a lamp, and descended as low as the rising of the water within would permit, with some hope of finding the cable; but this forsook us when we saw the state of matters there. The waves had mounted to the level of a square aperture above the door; and, as we concluded, swept away every loose article in the

lower apartment: but as the water alternately advanced and retired, we thought it best not suddenly to give over our inspection; and watching the moment of the reflux, I fortunately caught at something that floated within my reach, and drawing it after me, found it was the rope we sought for. This we dragged up with us to the top, and were next to consider how it could be made use of.

As the building had not yet given way, and the storm could not be worse, we grew less apprehensive for ourselves, as on the subsiding of the water we knew we should be released; but it was our wish to exert our strength, if possible, for the advantage of the unhappy mariners, whose cries now reached our

ears, and made a dreadful addition to the howling of the wind and the lashing of the sea.

The ship had struck pretty nearly on a line with the tower, and about two hundred yards to our left. The lights on board, which were numerous, and hung in different parts of the shrouds, gave us a sufficient view of those of whose misery we were forced to be the powerless spectators; whilst hundreds had also gathered with torches on the land, but were unable to lend any aid in this hour of terror.

For myself, I could no longer preserve my tranquillity, on distinguishing not only the voices of my fellow-creatures imploring assistance, but that the sufferers were my countrymen. With what force does this potent, and pre-

cious, and ennobling sentiment—the love of country—twine round the human heart! Nor is it, as it has been falsely called, a narrow and excluding principle, but concentrated philanthropy, and virtue of the purest kind!

De B., who was fully capable of entering into my feelings, saw my increased agitation, and starting up, cried out that something must be done. "Any thing, every thing," I replied: "let us but save one life, if we can do no more!" For now we perceived that the hull of the vessel scarcely appeared, and that numbers were climbing the masts and clinging to the cordage, and others endeavouring to crowd into the boat.

"I can swim," said the count; "can

you?" I told him I could, in almost any sea. "Then come," said he; "follow me;" and laying hold of the rope, we again went below, and fastening one end to an iron railing within, we veered it out of the window before mentioned, which was large enough to admit of one person passing through it: when I first plunged forward, and De B. instantly followed me.

Our object was to convey the cable towards the boat, if she came near enough; but this was impracticable; the sea running so high, that we could neither catch the rope nor guide ourselves; all our skill and strength being necessary to hinder the surge from driving us back, and crushing us against the walls we had forsaken.

At last we got clear of the building,

and as we drifted to land, were almost overwhelmed by the encumbered boat coming unexpectedly on us. To the shouts of the people in her, we added ours, but they could neither hear nor see us, and were soon indeed beyond us, who were rather floating at the mercy of the element than advancing by our own efforts. Yet advance we did; for at length I touched the ground; and at that moment the cries about us were redoubled, and the screams of a female voice could be heard.

The boat had overset, and the persons who had been in her were now scattered, and struggling against death in the water. De B., who was still near me, and whose vigour was as invincible as his courage, had caught the body of some one; and I was so fortunate as

to do the same; my prize was a woman; not yet insensible, for she spoke as I grasped her round the bosom with one arm, and encouraged her to be calm: in a few minutes we stood in shallow water; and though twice overthrown, I at last got fairly out of the reach of the waves, and running with my burden, placed her safely upon land.

With the help of the soldiers and others who had collected about us, the count and I carried the persons we had rescued from death, and the bodies of three more, to the cottage of a fisherman not far from us; and lights being brought, we found that one was an old and feeble gentleman; those whom we supposed lifeless, seamen who quickly recovered their speech; and, to my in-

expressible amazement and joy, for she was unhurt, and able to speak, in my arms I held my beautiful Arabella Rivers!

From the united effects of astonishment and fatigue I fainted, and fell to the ground. When I retrieved the use of my senses, I doubted the intelligence they had just given me, and asked the people who stood over me, with hesitation, where the lady was.

The count, who held a goblet of brandy in his hand, desired me to drink, and compose myself: the liquor I swallowed instinctively; but as to composing myself, I could no more do that, than make him comprehend the cause of my anxiety; but starting up, implored of him to tell me, for mercy's sake, where and how the lady was, whom

I had brought in with me; or if I had only fancied all that had passed.

Whilst I continued my questions, from an inner apartment, accompanied by the wife of the poor man who had received us under his roof, came the identical Miss Rivers, relieved from her wet clothes, and lovely as a vision from heaven, in defiance of the lowly robe with which she had been furnished.

It was now her turn to astonish Count De B. and the rest who were present: distracted and incredulous, she gazed on me, exclaiming frequently, "This is most extraordinary! Can it be that I owe my safety to Mr. Ardent? and in such a place as this!"

I assured her that my own surprise could only be equalled by the happiness I felt in having been of any ser-

vice to one whom I respected above all the world; and that I considered this instance of the kindness of Fortune as more than a recompense to me for the adversity I had endured since our parting.

Her manner of addressing me then assumed all the familiarity of old acquaintance, joined to what I wished to think the timidity and graceful confusion of a sentiment more tender than gratitude; and placing both her hands in mine, she said she was at a loss to know whom to thank for the life of her best friend and benefactor, though for her own indebted to me: and on my introducing the count, she, with much elegance, and in perfectly good French, made her acknowledgments to him. And by this time the old gentleman,

who had been placed in a different part of the cottage (which, after the custom of the country, was very spacious), entered, supported by one of the sailors, and added his compliments to those already paid us. He also spoke French, and had quite the appearance of a man of rank; but though an Englishman, and with something parental in his behaviour towards Miss Rivers, he was to me an intire stranger.

More surprising still was what I next observed; that though I knew him not, some of the soldiers, and several of the country people, who had come to lend assistance, seemed well acquainted both with his person and consequence; and calling him the Chevalier, would every one have flown to serve him.

At last he dispatched a messenger to

Challans, giving him directions to go in the name of Sir Robert Rivers to a particular house there, and request that a carriage might be sent for him, and a lodging provided.

He then expressed, in the warmest manner, his thankfulness for what he termed the generous gallantry of the count and myself; and told me he referred me to Arabella, whom he perceived I already knew, for a future explanation of several circumstances which he supposed I was eager to learn. "She is," he added, "unfortunate in her first visit to this country; where, however, I am so much at home, that I can almost promise a hearty welcome to you and your friend, in a day or two, at my own house.

By this and other things he said, it was plain he had, in common with

many, been deceived as to the true state of public affairs in France; and imagined the royalists in a flourishing condition, and a counter-revolution certain; and on the strength of this supposition had ventured to return to a country where he had resided for several years of his life, and possessed some property.

I afterwards learned that the vessel in which he embarked was an English trader, manned partly with foreigners, and commanded by an emigrant, who was entrusted with papers of private instruction for some principal persons of La Vendée friendly to the royal cause.

Happily but five of the crew perished; though the ship was so much damaged that she could not be repaired.

She was laden, amongst other things, with arms and gunpowder: the latter was rendered useless, but several thousand muskets were preserved, and brought off to the garrison the following day, when the storm had abated, and the wreck lay on dry land.

This acquisition, and the assurances of the captain that an expedition was ready to sail from England for this part of the coast, revived the general spirit, and made amends to the zealous Count de B. for all he endured on this memorable night: nor did I lose ground in his regard by my share in the transaction.

In the absence of Sir Robert's messenger, a table was spread, and such refreshments as could be procured set before us.

When I took my seat beside Miss

Rivers, I could not avoid smiling at the remembrance of my first interview with her at the dean's splendid mansion; and told her of what I was thinking; on which she presented me by name to Sir Robert, and reminded him of my being the gentleman whom she had mentioned as an inmate with her at the dean's.

This gave rise to an increased attention on the old baronet's part towards me; yet I thought his formality increased also; and in consequence of this remark a hundred conjectures perplexed me.

I had been so habituated to meet with unlooked-for changes of fortune, that I was already pretty well reconciled to this, and inclined to treat it as one of my ordinary occurrences, com-

pared with some I had experienced. But here were circumstances admitting of no satisfactory interpretation; and my cheerfulness, as I reflected on them, was succeeded by uneasiness. I put innumerable queries to myself, without being able to answer any of them: was Miss Rivers the old gentleman's wife? Her parent he could not be, according to her former story to me; nor her superior; he called her Arabella, and behaved to her with fondness, but not with condescension. Above all, I asked myself if I had cherished in my heart, through so many weary hours of absence, the image of one who had allowed mine almost to fade from her memory; and if single, and by some unaccountable chance elevated from depen-

dance to affluence, what pretensions had I to hope for any benefit to myself from the fact?

There was indeed a question I might have put, and received a ready answer to, but this never occurred to me; namely, what possible right or title I had to arraign the young lady for coldness or forgetfulness. But we judge of others by ourselves; I was attached to her, and vainly supposing she could not be indifferent to me, was mortified to perceive that this was nevertheless probable: and when I beheld gaiety animate her eyes, and the rose of health blow upon her lovely cheek, I could have wished them, with all my heart, exchanged for the pale hue of melancholy! Thus proving that it is impossible for some people to divest them-

selves of selfishness; and that the passion of love is not altogether disinterested.

In a shorter time than I expected, Sir Robert's messenger returned with a voiture from Challans; and he, having appointed persons to remain near the shore and try to recover such trunks as he had on board, and declaring how anxious they should be for the pleasure of seeing the count and me again, first helped the lady into the vehicle, and then ascending it himself, they took their departure for the town, which was at no great distance.

CHAP. XX.

In which what is not inserted will not be found.

THE count's eye searched me through, but he reserved his sentiments; and after we had laid in a sufficient store of *eau de vie* to counteract both the internal and external effects of the salt water, he proposed, as it was late, our retiring to the Castle; where we were congratulated on our safety by the whole household, who were waiting impatiently for our arrival.

They were also, I suppose, waiting

to laugh; at least they did so as violently as if they had not given way to that species of convulsion for a twelvemonth, both at my description of our adventure, and at the appearance of the count and of my royal highness.

We were each of us considerably affected by the brandy we had swallowed, which did not begin to operate until towards the conclusion of our walk; and at our entrance we insisted on singing several songs, and then proceeded to dance, to the great edification of the beholders.

At last with difficulty we were removed to our chambers, where eight or nine hours' rest restored us to the use of our rational faculties, and enabled us, on meeting next morning, to explain the particulars of what had happened, and

of which my narration over night had been totally unintelligible.

Having put on my masquerade dress, I sallied out to perform one of my tours, accompanied by the count and my usual train of attendants, who were commissioned to report the good news of the expected aid from England wherever we came; and this intelligence being corroborated by the landing of the arms from on board the vessel, my reception was more flattering than ever, and joy spread through every cottage, village, and town of the department.

To assist the enthusiasm of the moment, the bells of Fontenay, Challans, and other places, were rung; cannon were fired; and prayers offered up in the different churches.

In the midst of all this triumph I returned to disrobe; and willingly hearkened to the count's polite offer of going with me to pay our respects to Sir Robert. We proceeded to Challans, and were received with kindness by him and Arabella; who expressing much astonishment at my uncouth appearance, and some curiosity to know the cause of it, I thought it best to give a brief account of myself from the time of my leaving England; and offered, if she permitted me, a more particular detail, whenever she chose to favour me with her attention; intimating an anxiety on my part to learn something of her own history during the same period, with which she promised to indulge me by the first opportunity.

That of Sir Robert, which I also afterwards heard, will with more propriety come in here.

He was possessed of great estates in the north of England; and seventy years of age, but strong and healthy; and though endowed with a good natural understanding, and well educated, was little less than a bigot in his religious notions, which were those of the church of Rome.

From having lived many years in this part of France where we now were, he had contracted an attachment to the country and the government, previous to the revolution, of so strong a kind, that he pined for the restoration of the royal family, and firmly relied on its being an event likely to take place every day: so that as soon as he heard

of certain movements in the district of La Vendée, nothing could prevent his attempting to go there; and he was now come, in the full persuasion of witnessing the downfal of the republican innovation.

He was a single man; and so remarkable for parsimony and taciturnity, that he was said, by those who knew him but a little, never to have thrown away either a guinea or a word in the course of his life. Methought, had I been a man of property, I should rather have had such a person for my steward than my companion. How the fair goddess of my idolatry came to be his associate, shall be recorded by and by.

The accomplished and insinuating count quickly ingratiated himself both with her and the baronet; and before

we left them requested, in the name of the gentlemen of the garrison of Beauvoir, the honour of receiving them at their table when most agreeable to themselves; and the following day being fixed on, we withdrew.

An ingenious author somewhere says, that he has always had a moral antipathy to *secresy:* I have the same, and think the sentiment cannot be too highly praised; nor have I ever had occasion to conceal what I knew, from those whose intimacy I enjoyed, without feeling as if I cheated them.

To the amiable count I was bound by liking and by gratitude; and aware both of his discernment and his nice notions on every point, I had no doubt of his having in some measure penetrated into the state of my heart, and out of

motives of delicacy restrained himself from asking any questions respecting my acquaintance with Miss Rivers.

On our return to quarters I therefore determined, in conformity to the above-mentioned principle, no longer to withhold my confidence from a man I had reason to respect so highly; and by way of introduction, begged his opinion of the lady. His malice was ready for me: he replied she was, "*assez bien*—a pretty looking miss." And this he said with so serious a countenance as almost to alarm me. The fact is, she was any thing rather than *pretty*, in the common sense of that word; being, as I have formerly intimated, of a most dignified and striking presence. Nor indeed can I name a woman of her rank in life who possessed so much majesty,

without the smallest particle of coarseness.

Conscious of this, I eyed De B.; and perceiving, with some satisfaction, a smile playing about his lips, ventured to go farther; and at last told him exactly the manner of my original acquaintance with the young lady: adding, that I really thought, nothing could be more desperate than the passion I entertained for her, and few things more unaccountable; as I had persevered in loving without the ordinary encouragement of hope.

Many will think this declaration, made thus to a stranger, a violation of the decorum usually observed in matters of the sort; but my ideas are not those of the generality; and the count differed

in most respects from all the men I have ever known.

He listened with the most friendly complacency till I had finished, and then said, that he saw nothing so unnatural in my admiration of beauty, and (he had no doubt) of worth, far beyond the common lot of females: and that as to despair, it was totally out of the question, and should never enter the mind of a man, on any subject, who had gone to the guillotine, and—returned from it with his head between his shoulders!

He then with more seriousness expatiated on the bright prospects now opening to the aristocratic party; such was his belief: and enlarged on the happy cordiality which would infallibly subsist

between France and England, as soon as peace was established and the Bourbons reinstated.

It will be recollected, by such as remember the political condition of Europe at this period, that, however extraordinary these opinions may now seem, they were then not confined to the *Chouans* leaders!

We announced the coming of our guests the next day to the count's comrades, who appeared charmed at the idea of having a lady at their table; and resolving to cut a figure, while several were commissioned to superintend the requisite preparations, others departed to Challans, in order to invite some friends of both sexes to the entertainment.

It is necessary to know the French

to give credit to all this, which I allow to be almost incredible; that within the limits of an enemy's country, a handful of men, beset by dangers and ruined in their fortunes, whose wives, parents, and relatives were mostly exiles in a foreign land, should think of social pleasures, or of any pleasures at all. But it is, notwithstanding, most certain, that no body of luxurious London aldermen, secure in their city fastnesses, were ever merrier or busier in arranging the magnificence of a corporation feast, than these gay and gallant adventurers in getting ready our *fête* at Beauvoir.

The farmers' dames lent us several pieces of furniture, and their assistance otherwise; from the town various necessary articles were procured in abundance; and when, besides, it is consi-

dered that every French military man on the face of the earth is both a good practical cook and *maitre-d'hotel*, it will not appear surprising that every thing should have been prepared in the best style imaginable.

At an early hour next day I put myself into a better trim than ordinary, and riding to Challans, escorted Sir Robert and Miss Rivers back to the Castle.

The rest of the company assembled by degrees; and though we were very numerous, and rather noisy, I must say, in the phrase of the English newspapers, that the gala went off with general approbation.

The day happened fortunately to be one of uninterrupted serenity; and as we had an hour or two to spare before

dinner could be served, it was agreed to treat such of our visitors as chose that amusement with a view of the ancient and less frequented parts of our immense château, and the old-fashioned gardens that surrounded it. Had I no other reason for desiring to avail myself of this proposal, which originated with the count, I cannot but think such a device for passing the interval between the meeting of a company and their sitting down to table, quite as pleasant as what is practised by my worthy countrymen and countrywomen of Great Britain, who contrive to make it a period of execrable constraint and *ennui*, by staring at each other, talking solemn nonsense, or maintaining the silence and funereal aspects of a society of Carthusians.

Having obtained the key of the chapel from the good Marbœuf, who remained in conversation with Sir Robert, and giving my arm to Miss Rivers, we proceeded on our expedition, and explored galleries and passages without number. But the parties gradually dispersing, as accident or fancy inclined them, I was, as I wished to be, left alone with Arabella, in the very loft from which I had been a spectator, on my first coming to Beauvoir, of the interment by torch-light; and now descending into the chapel, and perceiving ourselves deserted by the rest, my fair friend seemed impatient to return to the reception-room, which I showed her we could do by means of the little door near the altar, and in much less time than by going back.

There are situations in which when a lady and gentleman meet they are indispensably necessitated to do one of two things; either to go away—or to make love. Ours was precisely of that kind; and, without consulting the inclination of my companion, I determined on the latter, as the most agreeable; and began by requesting she would answer a few questions on a point in which my happiness was concerned. I next kissed her hand, which I was scarcely able to raise to my lips, from the tremor that seized me: she was so obliging as to begin and tremble also; and to colour exceedingly; and this I am told by adepts was very proper behaviour on both sides: and a lady's maid at Bath, whom I procured to revise this chapter, has assured me

that it is quite natural for persons in a love-scene to look foolish and appear ashamed of themselves.

Had Miss Rivers now but done, as most other ladies would in the like circumstances; had she, after blushing excessively, taken the name of Omnipotence in vain; stamped, screamed, and threatened to faint; or upbraided me as a base, perfidious, insolent man, the probability is that I should have proved myself richly deserving of all those harsh epithets. But she smiled with ineffable sweetness; asked me if we had time for a conversation before dinner; and being assured we had, told me, that she would either sit down, or walk about, just as I pleased, and endeavour to reply to my questions, and acquaint me with such particulars of herself as she sup-

posed might interest or amuse me. At the same time her countenance shone with so much gentleness, benignity, and pure, confirmed, unsuspecting virtue, that I stood before her as undesigning as *Adolph the Simple* himself would have done; and for the soul of me could not avoid thinking her a modest woman, as well as a sensible one.

I then asked if she was still unmarried, and why she had left the dean's house? "As to your first question," she replied, "I am as you found me—single, and I believe unattached: my story will be an answer to your second.

CHAP. XXI.

Which says nothing whatever of conic sections.

"About six months ago the dean became the subject of one of those paragraphs which we occasionally see in the obituary of a magazine; stating, that on a certain evening Mr., or the Reverend, or Esquire such-a-person, after eating a very hearty supper, went to bed in apparently good health, and was found dead in the morning. This is strictly an account of the dean's transit from earth to heaven.

"A distant relation took possession of his son and his wealth; and I withdrew to board at an obscure farmer's in the neighbourhood, upon what the incomparable Fielding terms the handsome income enjoyed by parson Adams—about twenty-five pounds a year.

"Here a low fever, which would be a blessing were it always attended with similar effects, introduced me to the acquaintance of Mr. Graves, an apothecary; who was, as all apothecaries are, sufficiently skilful, exceedingly humane, very sensible, and not avaricious: he did not, however, resemble his brethren in every feature; for he was grievously afflicted with a fondness for news; and usually carried the London Chronicle in one pocket, to counterpoise a dispensatory which occupied the other.

" One evening he came, according to custom, to sit with me; and depositing himself in an arm-chair, which on account of his age I always had ready for him, desired me to fee him with some warm ale and ginger, and added, that, in recompense, he should not insist on my taking any more physic, but by way of indulgence would read the newspaper to me aloud.

" As he had exerted a great deal of patience for several days in his attendance on me, I could not do less than show my gratitude by having some for him; and prepared to listen " with sad civility" to a medley of false intelligence, political surmises, and so-forth.

" Having previously mounted his green spectacles, not so much on as *in* his nose, where a channel of consider-

able depth had been worn by the constant use of these glasses, he began to read with a noise like the humming of a bee; graciously permitting about one word in fifty to be distinctly heard; and intercepting the stream by his own comments; as thus—' hem—m——*ex-* '*press*——*Lisbon mail*——*Mr. Pitt rose* '—ay, ay; two columns as usual—— '*National Convent*—confound the na- 'tional convention——*Covent Garden*— '*fracas*—*shocking murder*—*omnium*— '*three per cents.*——Oh! here it is: 'Now, miss my dear, I have read the 'paper before, and amongst the adver- 'tisements there is one which, it strikes 'me, has some very particular meaning 'besides what it would seem to signify 'to ordinary readers; but I rather ima- 'gine that I understand those articles

"where more is meant than meets the 'eye," as well as any one; and I'm 'much mistaken if this be not of that 'description: judge for yourself: "A 'gentleman, near seventy years of age, 'residing chiefly in Yorkshire, who is a 'single man, and in easy circumstances, 'wishes for the society of a female of 'serious manners to superintend his do-'mestic concerns, and occasionally 'read to him: an unsullied character 'will be required of the person pro-'posing herself, and the most liberal 'terms secured to any lady willing to 'accept this offer. If musical, the more 'desirable. Please to address in answer 'X. Z. at the printer's." Now though 'I have desired you, miss dear, to judge 'for yourself, yet that is what you can-'not do, for these are matters which you

'do not understand: but I think I can 'judge for you. You have, I perceive, 'few friends, and no money; and I 'humbly conceive the more one has of 'both the better: What think you, 'therefore, of becoming reader to this 'old gentleman? He is probably some 'rich, ill-tempered oddity, who will nei- 'ther eat you, marry you, nor trouble 'you very long; and if you can secure 'a fixed income, though ever so trifling, 'it would be somewhat in addition to 'what you have already, and will only 'cost you a few scoldings; now and 'then a fit of sickness from confine- 'ment; and a pair of sore eyes, from 'crying, and reading small print. Shall 'I—do— let me write in your behalf, 'and who knows what may happen?'

"I laughed at first, and very heartily,

at this scheme for my preferment; but finding my friendly Galen seriously inclined to do what he proposed, I next expostulated, and at last complied: nor for ten days after did I once waste a thought upon the affair: but having recovered my strength, took the opportunity of a fine afternoon to pay a visit to the wife and family of this benevolent creature, who met me bare-headed, and with both hands hospitably extended, at his door, and presented me to Mrs. Graves and his two daughters; from all of whom I had received marks of good-nature during my illness.

"Shortly after my entrance he requested me to walk with him into his garden; and there taking out a letter, desired me, with a triumphant look, to peruse it.

"It was a reply to that he had written in his own name to X. Z.; stating that the description he had given of the young lady whom he wished to place with the advertiser, was in all respects that of a person who would answer for the situation; unless her being too youthful and well-favoured (it seems these were the expressions used by my medical patron) might be considered as objections: that, however, those should be overlooked, in consequence of my humility, and skill on the piano; and that I was welcome to set out for Bruce-abbey, near Wakefield, whenever I pleased.

"On finishing this extraordinary epistle, I knew not whether to laugh or weep; and begged of Mr. Graves to tell me how I ought to act; and if he

was in earnest. 'Never, miss my dear,' cried he, 'was I more in earnest in all 'my life; and I hope you are not so 'proud as to refuse such an offer, the 'like of which may never be made 'again; and indeed I believe the like 'was never made before. And as to 'your travelling into Yorkshire, and 'stage-coaching it, and all that, make 'yourself easy; you shall have money 'to carry you there, and my Kitty to 'go along with you; for we have a 'daughter married and settled at Wake-'field; and one of the girls goes once 'a year to see her, and take care of her 'when she is *confined*, which happens 'annually.'

"There was so much eccentric kindness in this speech that it overcame me; and I could not refrain from bursting

into tears, when I reflected on my friendless condition, and my obligations to the generosity of a stranger. To prevent misconception, I told him that I wept because his goodness overpowered me, and not from my struggles with false pride at the idea of abasement; that I had money sufficient to defray the expenses of my journey, and to return, if I failed of my object; and should think myself ungrateful to him if I neglected to give his exertions for my sake every fair chance of success.

"However feeble my hopes were, had they been even more so I believe I should have gone to Yorkshire, rather than mortify this tender-hearted old man; whose pleasure at my acceptance of the proposal was visible in every thing he said and did for the remainder of the

evening; during which he communicated our plan to his wife and daughters; and it was settled amongst us that Miss Kitty and I should depart in a few days.

"That I may not fatigue you with too many particulars, I shall only tell you, that we did so accordingly, and arrived in safety at Wakefield; and the following morning, under the care of Miss Graves's brother-in-law, I went to the Abbey, which is not more than half a mile from the town.

"Upon the way my companion gave me some information respecting the old gentleman to whom I was about to present myself: and this not of the most encouraging kind. He was, he said, a baronet of the name of Rivers; supposed to be amazingly rich and penurious,

quite a recluse, and not a little mad: and that, amongst many strange actions of his, it was reported that, on hearing of the execution of the king of France, he had all his rooms hung with black cloth, and put himself and his household into deep mourning. I trembled at hearing that he bore my name, without knowing wherefore, and would now have been rejoiced to have had any excuse for retreating; but it was too late to think of that, and my alarms, when I approached the door, could only be equalled by what you felt on first reaching the dean's house, and which, I dare say, you do not forget.

"Here my protector left me, whilst I followed a lame old man, who was also as deaf as a statue: he conducted me into a parlour lined with oak wainscot,

where the shutters of all the windows, except one, were closed, and there was just light enough for me to see, in a large dim glass with an ebony frame, that my face was pale from anxiety, and that my beauty, at least just then, would not spoil my prospects.

"In this place, more like the tomb of the Capulets than a drawing-room, I remained alone for some minutes; when another servant, almost as old as the first, made his appearance, and civilly desired to know my commands.

"I told him I was the person recommended as housekeeper to Sir Robert by Mr. Graves, of Bewly in Lincolnshire, who would have written by me to the baronet, but did not know his address. And this was the truth; for during the transaction Sir Robert's name had never

been mentioned—I suppose by his own orders.

"The man replied, that his master was then at prayers, but would see me in half an hour; and that in the mean time there was a garden, if I chose to look at it.

"I gladly accepted this offer, and was led by him through four or five rooms, as dark and dismal as the first; until we came to one where there was a vestibule, opening upon a damp and gloomy passage between rows of yew trees: and the man retiring, I advanced timidly along the path in its centre, and at the extremity descended by several stone steps into an inclosure, that appeared to have been planned about the time of king Henry the Eighth, and not cleaned or trimmed at least since the

civil wars. In the middle was a large circular pond, whose margin was concealed by gigantic reeds and long grass; and the water covered with a mat of weeds. From this diverged several alleys of yew and cypress trees; and the whole was surrounded by what perhaps had once been a shrubbery, but was grown into a forest.

"As I was employed in contemplating this melancholy wilderness, the servant who had last attended me came down from the terrace to acquaint me that Sir Robert would now see me; and returning with him, I was ushered into the library, which from its appearance might have passed for that of Friar Bacon; yet, as it was rather light and warm, and furnished with what I have

always thought one of the greatest treasures in the world, and a counterpoise to almost all its ills—a fine collection of books—I was more pleased than otherwise; and amused myself by examining the apartment until the baronet should appear.

"It was long and lofty; the floor entirely covered with an antique carpet; the books in cases; and the intervals between these were hung with grotesque tapestry: a pair of globes stood in frames upon a marble table between two high and narrow windows of stained glass: on another table lay implements for writing; and near it was a chair with a back of green velvet, and of such capacity that a modern bed might have been built out of the timber of it.

"The door, which was of oak and black with age, at length opened, and Sir Robert entered: on seeing him I made a low courtesy, intending to preserve all the appearance of *sang froid* I could command, that my refusal of his proposal (on which I was almost resolved) might seem like predetermination, rather than the effect of sudden disgust; but, the solemnity of every thing I had beheld since my arrival had unnerved me; I was so depressed, and felt so unsupported, that my voice failed me, and tears ran down my cheeks.

"For a minute I neither saw nor heard any thing; but, vexed at my own weakness, I collected myself, and raised my head to speak, when I perceived the old gentleman nearly as much over-

come by strong emotions as I was. My surprise was great; but it increased on his approaching me; when, gently placing his hand on my shoulder, in an accent of tenderness I was little used to, he called me Arabella!

"I looked in his face; it was that of a perfect stranger; and though I wished to have said something, fear and confusion made me dumb. 'Arabella,' he repeated, 'my kinswoman, give me 'your hand; and in time I hope for a 'share in your affection, which I shall 'endeavour to deserve by protecting 'you.'

"And now I must have fallen to the ground from agitation, had he not sustained me. 'Oh, sir!' I gathered courage to say, 'who and what are you?

'and how am I entitled to your protec-
'tion, or the honour of your alliance?'
"'I will tell you, child,' he replied:
'Your mother was my niece, and the fa-
'vourite of my heart: I allowed my
'love for her to be alienated by misre-
'presentation; and, though well able
'to relieve them, left her and her hus-
'band to contend with indigence and
'obscurity, till death deprived you of
'your parents, and me of my peace of
'mind; for soon after that event, I dis-
'covered that I had been unjust, and
'wished, but in vain, to make some
'amends for the injury I had done. Of
'your brother or yourself I could learn
'nothing, but that you were both alive,
'though I wrote often to my corre-
'spondents in England from France,

'where most of my life has been passed, 'and from which country political dis- 'turbances have driven me.

"'Solitude, in my present situation, 'became so irksome, in addition to the 'infirmities of age, that I deter- 'mined on seeking the society of a per- 'son such as my fortunate advertisement 'described: the answer transmitted to 'me contained your name in full, and 'threw me into a state of unhappiness 'and alarm from the moment I received 'it until now; for I could not believe 'that accident alone was about to fulfil 'my wishes, and doubted whether some 'other Arabella Rivers might not exist: 'nor was I satisfied until I saw you: you 'are indeed Arabella; and in the strik- 'ing resemblance you bear to your

'poor mother, I find a dear yet painful 'reproach: through you I owe reparation to her—come, Arabella, to my 'arms!'

CHAP. XXII.

The history of Mexico totally omitted.

"I LEAVE you to judge my astonishment and my happiness. Truth has often the blessed privilege over falsehood, of bringing conviction along with it. No doubt here arose to perplex me: I clung to my benefactor's neck; and after weeping my gratitude, when I could articulate a sentence, I told him that there was nothing I would not do to prove it. From that day to the present I have been unremitting in my attentions to him; but without any merit

on my part; because, exclusive of my obligations to his generosity in acknowledging me as his relation, and snatching me, as he did, from penury, he has behaved to me with unvarying tenderness, and I owe him more than I can ever repay.

"You may be sure that immediately after my unexpected establishment at my uncle's I indulged myself by writing an account of all that had happened to the valuable friend who was the cause of it, the good Graves; assuring him, as is most true, that I shall never forget what he had done for me.

"I cannot say that my time at the Abbey passed unpleasantly, although we did not go into society, and hardly ever received visitors. The loss of company was to me, from my former mode

of life, rather an advantage than an inconvenience. I improved my mind, not only by reading in what I called the Friar's study, but by conversing with Sir Robert, who has great information on most subjects, and has travelled in many parts of the world: and (as he gave me permission) I found abundance of exercise in directing the reformation of the neglected grounds about his place, and in excursions amongst our poor neighbours, with whom a few trifling acts of humanity rendered me a sort of favourite.

" On Sir Robert's part, though habitually of a melancholy cast, and rigid in his religious notions, he rewarded all my endeavours to please by appearing cheerful whenever we were together, and with exemplary delicacy avoiding the

discussion of those points on which our sentiments might be supposed to disagree. He was equally liberal towards his domestics, who were of different persuasions; and made it one of his rules to send those of the established church to attend me, when I went to prayers at Wakefield, with an injunction laid on me, never to omit inviting the clergyman of the parish to return and dine with us at the Abbey. He was such another as you have described your venerable father to me, and generally accepted our Sunday's invitation; when we also had at table the priest who lived near us, and acted as chaplain to Sir Robert: nor was it possible for brothers to be more cordial towards each other than these men always were; as they

each possessed a good understanding, and all the meekness and charity of the heart which genuine Christianity bestows.

"In short, the life I continued to lead was one to be envied indeed—not pitied; and I exchanged it with some regret (when my uncle intimated his wish to return to France) for the tumultuous scenes of London; where we remained for a fortnight, and then went down to Portsmouth to embark. Our voyage was short, and not disagreeable, until towards the conclusion, when the winds became boisterous, and produced the frightful accident which occurred on our reaching the French coast; but as Sir Robert has escaped, I can scarcely bring myself to lament it, since it gave

rise to my meeting again with one for whom I have the highest esteem, and to whose humanity I owe my life."

"Would to heaven," I cried, "dear Miss Rivers, you might also owe all your future happiness to the same person! I have not time, nor temper, nor pretensions, to torment you with the tedious persecutions of courtship, and cannot resist telling you in a word—that I love you, Arabella, to excess!—tell me only in return that I do not love totally without hope, and I shall try to be content."

Her reply was as noble as the look which was the herald of it: "Mr Ardent, I expected this; and you in your turn expect me to answer you favourably; an interpretation which, if you will, you may put on my words, when I as-

sure you that there exists no man whom I prefer to yourself. But here, I apprehend, our love must rest; for I am in a state of perfect dependance on another, and your circumstances are not prosperous: let us then not show ourselves as poor in our minds as in our fortunes, but trust to time and chance for a decision. Promises are not merely *needless*, but *immoral*; and that neither of us in future may be enabled to upbraid the other with fickleness or perfidy, let us not make any, but—do you take my hand and lead me back to the company."

Was there ever such a wooing since the days of the Patriarchs! I suspect not; and yet this is faithfully the account of what passed between us.

I obeyed her mandate; and apply-

ing to the spring, easily opened the little door formerly mentioned, and so passed through the hall to that in which nearly all the rest were assembled. Soon after, Count de B. and another officer, with two or three ladies, entered; when the count taking me aside, cautioned me to avoid, during the day, dropping one word by which the townspeople might become acquainted with the secret of my occasionally personating a man of consequence; sarcastically observing, that, if I kept my own council, no one would suspect me. I promised to lay down my princely character, and be as much of the gentleman as possible; with which he was satisfied: and I perceived he had already insinuated to the strangers that a certain great person was absent in a distant place, and would remain so

for some time; which quieted their curiosity.

We sat long at dinner; and when it was concluded, rose all together, according to the French practice; which is in this respect also different from what prevails in England, and, in the opinion of some, more polite than allowing, or rather compelling, the females to withdraw; who carrying with them all the elegance and softness which are the charms of society, leave the other sex to inflame their brains with port wine, and plague one another into ill-humour by useless and acrimonious disputations on politics. *They certainly manage these matters better in France.*

As we were met for the purpose of being happy, we determined on doing what would most effectually contribute

to make us so: not to speak on politics or mathematics, and to enjoy the company of the fair as much as possible; and music being provided, we danced till a late hour; Miss Rivers honouring me with her hand most of the time.

After this, proper escorts were appointed to attend our guests to their several houses; Arabella and Sir Robert being entrusted to my care.

On my return, and when retired to my apartment, I made all due exertions to persuade myself that the events of the last two or three days had been such as I could have wished. I had recovered the object of my strongest affections; had made them known to her, and experienced not an unfavourable reception;—how the affair would end, was a different matter; but, as usual, I left the

winding-up to Hope, which, instead of deserting me, verified the beautiful image of the sweet poet Goldsmith, who says that Hope, like the taper,

> "Still, as darker grows the night,
> Emits a brighter ray."

From this period, my interviews with Arabella were very few, and never but in the presence of the baronet: and this arose equally from a principle of propriety in her and myself. She looked with the abhorrence characteristic of elevated minds, on every clandestine act; well knowing that *rectitude and concealment are generally incompatible*; and disdaining to imitate the conduct of the majority of females without fortune, who, for the sake of an establishment (to give the *mildest* reason), scruple not to involve the men whom they profess

most to love, in all the dreadful consequences of an imprudent connexion; and alike foolish and hard-hearted, immerse their husbands and themselves in wretchedness, that they may escape the vulgar stigma annexed to celibacy, and breed beggars to encumber the state.

I saw her singular and admirable motive; and the observation, though it did not diminish, but added to my passion, served also to ennoble it. I resolved to prove myself worthy of an interest in her excellent heart, by the strictest self-denial; and thus, for the remainder of the winter, we mutually regulated our conduct towards one another: nor when we met, did we dare to converse on love even by means of our eyes; for she was aware of the influence which hers could have; and I

recollected, what a great many men, called honourable, seem to forget, that an innocent woman may be *ogled* out of her peace, as well as robbed of it otherwise.

During this time, though seldom annoyed by attacks from the republican party, the royalists throughout La Vendée made but trifling advances: their hopes of assistance from England grew daily more feeble; and the peasantry enrolled in their cause, becoming rather lukewarm, were with difficulty prevailed upon to assemble on stated days, as they had been used to do. This threw a damp upon the zeal of several of their chieftains; some of whom had in despair withdrawn themselves, under various disguises, and sought refuge in exile.

Count de B. was of a different cha-

racter; and when I spoke to him of these desertions, and asked what course he himself intended to pursue, I heard his answer with melancholy admiration: "To succeed or to die! my friend. Not that I can blame those who forsake us; they are objects of compassion: for how perfectly miserable must that man be, who can leave his native land for any other! They, however, egregiously deceive themselves, in supposing that in their plans for escape they evade the vigilance of the usurpers of our government: on the contrary, I know that out of policy their departure is permitted; and this system will be attended with success; I fear we shall be finally subjected, but I shall not survive the ruin of our party."

Sir Robert I also found had at last

begun to catch the contagion of despondency, and to wish himself once more on British ground. But many obstacles now opposed themselves to a project of returning; as the coasts in these parts were beset with cruisers, stationed to intercept any British ships attempting to throw in a supply of money or arms for the use of the insurgents.

As Arabella and her uncle had continued to reside at Challans, it was necessary for me, when I desired to visit them, to go to the town in the day-time; and to this de B. and his friends objected, on many accounts, but not for a reason which now appeared particularly to concern myself.

In returning about mid-day from one of these excursions, as I passed the porch of a deserted convent I observed

a printed paper newly pasted against the wall, and had curiosity to examine its contents; when, with considerable surprise, I read an exact description of my dress of ceremony, and a tolerably clear one of my person; followed by an exhortation, on the part of the government, addressed to the honest citizens of the district, "not to suffer me to brave the laws, by fomenting divisions in the nation; but to seize and deliver up the *ci-devant* Duke de —— to justice."

I hastened back to the garrison with the paper, which I pulled down, and submitting it to the count's inspection, requested his opinion; but he, instead of smiling at it, made me more uneasy, by showing a good deal of alarm, and de-

claring that he regarded such a proclamation, though a forgery, as a proof of treason having infected the inhabitants of a town hitherto supposed faithful and incorruptible; and warned me against rashly venturing there again.

Here was a new embarrassment for me, under which no portion of ingenuity I possessed could afford me any relief. There existed indeed a chance, and barely a chance, of my escaping, in company with such emigrants as fled from the country every week or fortnight: but, the thought of leaving Arabella, I knew not to what dangers, and perhaps of leaving her for ever, was so painful, that it never entered my mind to make the attempt. Yet I pined in secret to breathe again the air of Eng-

land; and took more delight than it is possible for one not circumstanced as I was to conceive, in frequently strolling to the sea-shore, and for hours together pacing the sands, and thinking of home.

CHAP. XXIII.

Stands precisely between that which goes before and that which comes after it.

ONE evening, when it was almost full tide, I stood on the margin of the water, and so far forgot myself in recalling the past, and musing on my native village, my parents, and my early friends, none of whom I was likely ever more to see, that night overtook me. This had often happened before; and as soon as darkness came on, I had usually retired; but on this occasion I felt disinclined to do so; and sat down, to admire the fine

effect of the rising moon upon the ocean, which heaved with a slow and gentle swell, and reflecting every ray, shone as if strewed with diamonds.

Near me lay a boat, of the ordinary size; and the water encroaching upon the rock where I sat, I left it, and removed into this shallop, still lying on its side, that I might the longer enjoy the rich scene that had attracted me.

Here I resumed my meditations; at one time fancy carrying me back to the parlour at the parsonage; at another, transporting me into a cottage of my own, with Arabella for my companion; when I observed, emblematic of my life! that I was fairly afloat, and had neither rudder nor oars.

This gave me but little concern, be-

cause I considered that, at worst, I had only to let the boat drive, jump overboard, and swim to land. But a wish to save myself trouble, and preserve the property of another, induced me to delay as long as it was at all prudent.

Now prudence is an admirable quality; but a man should begin to practise it from his infancy; otherwise his essays at a mature age will be somewhat awkward, and he will be liable to some such perilous catastrophe as in this instance befel me: for as soon as I had, according to my calculation, arrived at the boundary which should divide wisdom from temerity, I found that I was little less than half a league from the shore; and before I ceased wondering how this could happen, I was removed to double

that distance; and as I had not fins, like the renowned *Nicolao il pesce*, to swim back was out of my power.

A breeze came on next, and hurried me more rapidly to sea; my alarm increasing almost to frenzy: I raised my voice, and even howled with terror; and I verily believe that Jonathan Wild the Great, when in a similar situation, was not more forgetful of his dignity than I was of mine.

My polite readers need not to be reminded of the deportment of this *great man* on the occasion referred to. Reflexion told him, that where there was no one to witness it, his magnanimity was so much *greatness* thrown away: in like manner it whispered to me the inutility of straining my lungs, when there

was not any person within hearing; and the propriety of remaining tranquil, where doing the reverse could answer no end.

My distress was, notwithstanding, infinitely more poignant than I had ever felt before. I grant that I had already been exposed to death, and stood two or three times on the very threshold of his grim majesty's palace: but, in the first place, I must observe, that there is no reason why a man should be the less afraid of death, only because he has previously had the good fortune to escape it; and secondly, a death distinguished by peculiar horrors seemed now to await me; it was to be endured in solitude, a state which ever adds to our miseries and lessens our enjoyments;

and it was likely to be slow and lingering: for the night was rather calm than otherwise.

Had it indeed proved stormy, my fate must have been speedily decided, as the boat was without ballast, and leaky.

How the time passed I can hardly tell; I did not dare to sleep, or scarcely wink my eyes, from a notion that perhaps some boat might approach and rescue me, if I could make myself heard by the people on board; but my fortune, kindly saved me the trouble of such an exertion, by not allowing any thing in the shape of a vessel to come in sight: and I suppose she would also have prevented the return of day-light, had it been in her power; but as it was not, the sun at length rose, and displayed on

every side a melancholy waste of ocean, or nearly a waste, since it was with difficulty I could descry two small islands which lie off the French coast, and between which I had been driven.

As the day advanced, my chance of every thing but drowning, diminished, my boat having let in a great deal of water: towards evening, however, my prospect was somewhat diversified by the probability of being starved; and I saw the coming on of the second night of my suffering with absolute despair.

Reckless of life, and weakened by fasting, I lay down in the wet, which I had no longer patience or strength to clear out with my hat, as I had continued to do so far; and a sensation more resembling fainting than sleep overcoming me, I remained motionless, parched

with thirst, and light-headed with hunger: and in this condition endured another night, and saw the dawn of another morning.

To my great astonishment, instead now of being weaker, as I might have expected, I was more refreshed than at night-fall, and my thirst was not so violent. For this I cannot account, unless by attributing the circumstance to my having imbibed a portion of moisture through the pores of my skin from the water, which had accumulated under me to the depth of at least a foot, and of which, with the little strength I had, I endeavoured to rid myself: but the task was too hard for me; I dropped my hat, and wildly wringing my hands, raised my eyes—and was closing them again in anguish, when I imagined I

saw the sails of a vessel above the horizon. I got up, and was convinced, not only of the fact, but that the ship was at no great distance. Instantly hope returned, and brought back strength and the love of existence.

I pulled off my clothes, and waving them at arm's length, tried to raise my voice, and thus catch the attention of some person; but my agitation was such, that I could not call aloud; and my sole dependance was on the chance that, as the sea was not very rough, my boat would attract notice: and so it proved; for with inexpressible joy I perceived several men had gathered on the poop, and were looking towards me. Soon after they cheered, and in a few minutes more got their boat out, with four men in her; who rowing up

to me, took mine in tow, and again pulled for their vessel; whilst I lay panting with surprise, and unable to speak or move.

When we came alongside, they hoisted me into their boat, leaving mine to the waves; and then, by a contrivance, well known to seamen, the ship's boat, with its contents, was lifted up, and lowered upon the deck.

More could not well have been performed in a shorter time, or with fewer words; my deliverers and myself being perfectly silent during the transaction.

But no sooner was I on board than they collected round me, and began to put a variety of questions to me, which I was unable to answer from the sickness I felt at the smell and sight of a piece of boiled beef on a pewter dish, that one

man was cutting into portions for the rest of the crew, who, to the number of eighteen or twenty, were on the deck.

My silence made them conclude that I did not understand English; and the captain being called for, came over and addressed me in the Dutch language; but I signified that I did not comprehend him; and by degrees recovering the use of my tongue, I informed him (on the supposition that he and his crew were my countrymen) of my being an English prisoner of war who had escaped to a part of the western coast of France; and then added the remainder of my adventure as it had occurred.

He first ordered me a glass of brandy and some food, which soon restored me; and then told me he would do all

he could to serve me, but was apprehensive of coming to some harm on my account, "because," said he, "this is an American trader, and we are bound for a French port, where there are strict orders against our receiving any British prisoners attempting to escape; and should you be known, we must, I am sorry to say, give you up: however, stow away some more beef and brandy, and then go below with me."

I followed him accordingly, and repeated my story with additions; but I plainly perceived that he believed me not to be the obscure person I represented myself, and was privately determined to make a merit of the act with the enemy, and surrender me into their hands as soon as we came to anchor.

I pretended, however, not to see

this, but thanked him for preserving my life, and for the protection he promised me; yet I had not a doubt of my being doomed once more to go to prison, and that before many hours were over.

A good deal of trampling and running above obliging him to go upon deck, we went up together, and there observed all hands busy taking in the sails, and, as it is called, making every thing snug; the wind having changed, and the weather threatening to be boisterous. Shortly after it blew a perfect storm; and this continuing with equal violence for three days, drove us completely out of our course, and damaged the vessel so severely, that the captain said he was determined on trying to run for the Cornish coast, and refit in some

port there, rather than persevere in his first intention.

My exultation at hearing this may be readily imagined: the whistling of the gale was music to my ears; and I murmured blessings on its fury, which for a day more was unabated; and by that time, to increase my satisfaction, England was in view; and steering with a steady breeze we at last got into Falmouth.

Though under obligations for my immediate safety to the American captain, my conscience was not very uneasy upon that score, the wind being at least as much entitled to my gratitude as he was; and I had besides laboured hard, and stooped to the meanest offices during the passage: so that on anchoring, which we did upon a Sunday after-

noon, and in the midst of heavy rain, I thought it not worth my while to disturb the commander, who was asleep in his cabin, with the formalities of bidding him adieu; but stepping into a boat with some of the sailors, who made no objection, I was put on shore, and there separating from them, walked into the town.

It is said of one of the most delightful of modern poets, whose name I have before mentioned, that on his arrival in London, after long travel, the money he had in his pocket amounted exactly to three pence and one halfpenny; such a person as myself had therefore no right to complain at discovering, when I searched mine, that they were perfectly empty.

The pleasure of setting my foot on

the soil which gave me birth, was materially lessened by the reflexion that the current coin of the realm was absolutely necessary as a passport through it; and that without this, I might just as well turn about again, and walk back into the water.

I had yet above an hour of daylight for my operations, during which I thought it not advisable to remain in the streets of Falmouth, where my strange and mean appearance might excite suspicion, and expose me to some inconvenience: and this apprehension will seem the less extraordinary, when I observe that I had on a blue short coat, much torn and stained, a scarlet plush waistcoat, trowsers of grey linen, and a pair of old stiff dragoon-boots: my beard was long; my cheeks lank;

and on my head I wore a soldier's hat, the crown of which was very shallow, and the leaves, being let down, so large as to extend on either side beyond my shoulders. These embellishments, together with a shirt of "*filthy dowlass*," and a ragged silk handkerchief round my neck, I had procured at different times from a Jew in Challans, in exchange for my regimental coat, sword, &c.: and it must be allowed, that, with such an exterior and an empty purse, a man should have more than common impudence to enter a publichouse in an English town, and more than ordinary good-fortune not to be instantly turned out of it.

For my part, I had no inclination to make the experiment, and still less to encounter the captain who had brought

me back, or any of his crew; and therefore resolved to leave the place and go forward, before it grew dark, to some village where, if charity did not afford me shelter for the night, one of the fields or gardens near it would.

I accordingly marched off at a round pace, and had proceeded four or five miles before any thing like a habitation presented itself to my view. At length I beheld what appeared amidst the increasing gloom to be a small wood, from which my eyes were saluted —to use the happy expression of Milton —"with a long levelled rule of streaming light." This, and the rain again beginning to fall, made me hasten: I ran in amongst the trees to protect myself from the wet, and found that I was

within a few steps of a little rural church, and that the congregation inside was engaged, with somewhat more zeal than melody, in singing a psalm from the version of those illustrious bards, Messieurs Sternhold and Hopkins. Their breath had sullied the windows so much that I could only discern a part of the assemblage, consisting of the lower class of people; and that the clergyman had ascended the pulpit.

"So," said I to myself, "I may at least, though pennyless, enter the house of prayer, and get both shelter and moral instruction for nothing;" and pushing open the door, I stepped in, and took my stand unnoticed near a group of simple-looking country lads, who occupied the aisle in front of the preacher.

When the psalm was finished, and silence restored, the clergyman, whom I had not yet looked at, began the customary prayer in a voice which I was persuaded I had heard before, and I raised my eyes to find if by chance I could recollect him; but I was nigh forgetting the reverence due to the sacred place, when I saw, in the person of the orator, my dear and respectable friend Gay.

An occurrence so fortunate and so singular almost deprived me of my wits; and my impatience to address him was so violent, that, however eloquent and impressive his discourse might have been, it was totally lost on me; who, instead of attending to his doctrine, was examining the lineaments of his face,

and thinking of all that had happened to myself, and conjecturing all that could have happened to him, since our parting.

CHAP. XXIV.

Which would be the last were it not followed by another.

GAY'S sermon would have appeared tedious to me had it been as short as a German hunting-mass, which was limited to the time between the baron's putting his foot into his stirrup and getting on his horse's back; but I thought this prolonged for my annoyance, and that it would never end: yet when the preacher concluded and came down, I knew not what to do, or how to accost him; for time had greatly altered my counte-

nance and figure, and I was aware that the rags I wore would render my identity still more questionable. I therefore delayed until most of his flock had left the church; and just as he laid aside his surplice, moved towards him, and, saluting him humbly, requested he would do me the favour to tell me whether he was the rector of the parish or not. He smiled, and replied, "Not I, in truth, my honest friend; but the curate, at your service: pray what can I do for you?"—"In the first place, sir," said I, "you can look at me steadily; and secondly you can probably translate these few Latin words—

"Tibi amicus ——————
Inculto latet hoc sub corpore."

Upon hearing this he appeared very much discomposed; either from be-

lieving me a madman, or from that sort of confusion natural to one in doubt; for now he feebly repeated, "Ard—Ard——But—Lord bless and keep me! that's impossible!"——"No, dear Gay," I cried; "it is even himself who stands before you: hesitate no longer to acknowledge your old acquaintance, who, though poor, is as much as ever a man of honour, and your faithful friend."

But by this time his doubts were fled, and his transports as lively as my own. We remained for some minutes shaking each other's hands, smiling, and articulating half-sentences; and then the goodness of his heart began to do its office, and tears filled his eyes as they wandered over my shabby coat and meagre person. He next exclaimed; "But why do we stay here! Come

along with me, my dear fellow; and thanks be to Heaven, though it is to a hovel I invite you, that hovel is my own. It is too bad, however (looking at me again)—too bad this: what, or how—— but—do not tell me any thing yet: not one word till we get in;" and during this speech he pulled me with him through the church-yard, whilst the astonished clerk carried a lantern before us to a flight of steps that descended to the road; and exactly opposite this stood poor Gay's cottage; which I shall endeavour to describe as it appeared by day-light, but not until I have related the particulars of the joyous and hospitable reception he gave me.

The door was opened to us by a female, whose figure reminded me of my affectionate old landlady in Paris. She

was arrayed in a neat *tabinet* gown, with a clean white apron; and a speckled handkerchief on her head; and in her hand she held a small Bible, and the shagreen case of her spectacles.

She first scolded Gay with an air of matronly authority, for going out without his surtout, and then consoled him, by observing that she had a good fire in the parlour; the door of which stood open, and displayed a square mahogany table and a commodious arm-chair set near it: the floor was covered with green baize; a pair of slippers were placed to air against the fender: and on the hearth lay a spotted pointer, who signified his joy at his master's return by sundry motions of his tail, and his sense of my intrusion by a sound which had nothing of anger in it, but rather implied that,

though I was an odd-looking fellow, I might come in if I pleased. And in this he seemed to argue like the old woman, who perceiving me arm in arm with Gay, looked a little surprised, but drew a chair for me nevertheless; and I could observe an interchange of glances between her and my friend, as the signal for an additional candle; and a jug of ale, with which she presently came in; and setting it, and a couple of rummers, on the table, whispered Gay; and being answered by a nod, left us to ourselves.

We now renewed our mutual congratulations; again and again laughing at the accident which had thus thrown us in one another's way.

This was one of those invaluable moments so rare in the life of man; and perhaps none of its events are di-

stinguished by delight more unalloyed than the meeting of long-parted friends, when the "o'er-fraught heart" beats so pleasurably, and the world and all its sordid interests are forgotten.

As soon as our tumults had subsided, Gay began by saying; "Though I am pained and astonished at seeing you, my good friend, in this plight, I have the satisfaction of thinking that I receive you under a roof which I may call my own, and that there is not a palace in Europe where you could meet with a more cordial welcome. My Duenna is gone to prepare a bed for you, with which I am luckily provided; and in half an hour you shall attack the remnants of a leg of mutton that served me to-day for my dinner: in the mean

time, taste my ale, and tell me your story."

I complied with his first request instantly, and then with his second; not omitting the smallest circumstances worth mentioning.

During the recital, his agitation was frequently little inferior to what my own had been on some of the most memorable occasions; and when I had done, he declared that *Sinbad* himself had not suffered more by "flood and field" than I had. "And after yours," said he, "my own history is not worth listening to; but you shall have it notwithstanding; though I shall make it as short as I can, and would willingly give it all the grand diction and solemn energy of Johnson, to render it consequential.

"You remember that I was obliged to remain as Flaybottom's assistant long after your going to Oxford; all my father's endeavours to obtain me a curacy proving fruitless. At length, however, I did get this wished-for appointment; and posted eagerly to a village in Gloucestershire, where I was put into possession, with a salary of forty pounds per annum, and so much duty, that I was not in any danger of falling into flesh, and indeed rather expected to wear out what I already had on my bones. You would lose all patience, were I to relate minutely the occurrences of a country curate's existence, wherein 'one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another;' but I sometimes think of drawing up a regular narrative in writing, and sending it to

the press, as a warning to those ambitious young men, who, while immured in college cloisters, allow their imaginations to run riot on the subject of the innocent and happy life prepared for them when they become labourers in the vineyard—*i. e.* country curates in what are called *genteel* parishes.

"Mercy on them, how little do they know of the truth! But in saying this, I allude to such as myself; men who do their duty conscientiously, and have hardly any thing besides their salaries to depend on for subsistence: not to the younger sons of some patrician family, who, with fashionable clothing, good introductions, and a pair of smart horses, may bid defiance to Satan and the Rector; and gallop about from one great man's house to another, courted by the

squire's daughters for husbands, and the envy of militia captains at every ball in the neighbourhood. This, alas! would be but an ill description of either my career, or that of many of my brothers.

"On my arrival, I paid my compliments to some of the grandees amongst my parishioners, and received from them, according to custom, a general invitation to their tables; of which, for several reasons, I but seldom availed myself; though I went often enough to be satisfied that on those occasions I was not in my proper place. No man of my turn likes to be either pitied or endured: and then, their rich dishes and luxurious accommodations but badly prepared me for relishing my own homely diet and poor lodging.

"Amongst the gay men whom I

met with in those places, any little erudition I possessed was a subject of ridicule; whilst my ignorance in politics, the price of lands, and the elegant art of making fat bullocks still fatter, brought on me the contempt of the seniors.

"The young ladies laughed at my awkward bows; at my inability to dance, or to expound charades; and above all, at my *quizzical* dislike to indecent conversation, and my perseverance in wearing black breeches. And their mothers and aunts, not content with criticising my sermons (which, by the bye, were generally the best compositions of some of the greatest English divines), indulged themselves in commiserating and encouraging me; telling me that I was by no means a fool, if I

could but once get over my diffidence; and that one of the stupidest curates they ever had, ten times worse than myself—learned at last to read prayers and play Casino very very prettily!

"This, you will allow, was excessively flattering, and must have made my time pass charmingly.

"The humbler classes of my parishioners were not behind-hand in their civilities. Some of them, who were methodists, calumniated me as an infidel; and those of the opposition, or the church-goers, said I was a *swaddler*: and before I was three months amongst them, I was accused of having designs, at one and the same time, on the heart and fortune of Miss Deborah Twist, daughter and heiress of Mr. Thomas Twist, post-master, chandler, and church-

warden, in our village; and on the person of Miss Marjorum, my clerk's sister; and I protest without the least foundation whatever; for the first of these charmers was pitted with the small-pox, blind of an eye, lame of a leg, and remarkably ill-tempered; and the latter I can compare to no one, except Sir Pertinax Macsycophant's mistress,—she being about six feet high, and nearer fifty than twenty; troubled with an asthma, and not a little devoted to drinking drams.

"As to the delight of dwelling amidst the beauties of rural scenery, breathing the pure air of the country, and admiring the simple manners of the nymphs and swains; I never can hear the expressions without indignation. Believe me they talk nonsense who ex-

patiate on any such ideal topics. Nothing can be more shocking to just feelings, than the contrast presented to the eye in a rich, high-dressed, and well-inhabited country; where useless acres of what are styled *pleasure grounds*, are an insult to the wretched hut of the hard-working peasant, who for want of land cannot support his family; where against the wall of a park, or the gate of a sumptuous palace, stands the houseless and shivering pauper, splashed by the gaudy phaeton as it passes, and eyeing the silly driver, and the painted hussy at his side, as creatures of another order of being!

"And with regard to the purity of the air, it is much upon a par with that of their morals who inhale it; for it is really laughable to hear of the innocen-

cy of the country folks! The assizes afford proofs of this, when there is scarcely an enormity which the heart of man can devise, or his hand perpetrate, which they do not develope. No; let me hear no more of rustic virtues: there is just as much physical and moral health to be had in Holborn, as in the valleys of Gloucestershire, or any other valleys in England.

"In this situation I continued until a year ago; when hearing of this cure, and that the gentleman who served it wished for society (Heaven help him!), I effected an exchange, and came off to this remote corner, where, at least, I am safe from being molested by the great and the wealthy; and indeed consider myself almost the richest, and incomparably the wisest person in the place,

unless I except Dame Darnel, whom you have seen, and who manages for me; and in whose affections I believe I hold the next place to *Ponto*, and her son, who is a soldier, and left his dog behind him, when he marched away with his regiment.

"Yet, somehow, I like not the thought of remaining here either; and shall shortly, I suspect, leave this parish, and go to London, where I conceit a man starves with more *eclat* than any where else? But—now for our supper:"—saying which, he blew upon an ivory whistle which he kept in his pocket; and immediately the cold mutton made its appearance, accompanied by another allowance of ale and some excellent bread, with which I made an admirable meal; and being fatigued, re-

quested my friend not to incommode himself to procure me a bed, but permit me to sleep where I was. This he would not hear of; and assured me, that, though he were to grant my petition, he did not dare to affront his housekeeper, who would take it very ill should I refuse to sleep where she had made preparations for me; and forthwith I was conducted by the old dame to a good sort of closet, containing an excellent bed, in which I slept soundly till nine o'clock the next morning; when I rose, and assisted Gay to consume a copious mess of boiled bread and milk, that stood ready for us in the parlour.

Whilst thus employed, I asked him how he contrived to live so well; or if a guinea in that country was worth two-

and-forty shillings. He replied, that doubtless necessaries were cheaper there than in the metropolis; but that he was also an economist, and had moreover something still left of a legacy of two hundred pounds bequeathed to him by a relation; and that as much of it as I pleased, was heartily at my service; "and not only that," continued he, "but I think I can rectify your wardrobe too;" and leading me to his treasury of cast garments, he supplied me with such things as I wanted most, and so as to metamorphose me from a foreign sailor into something resembling an Irish priest on his travels; a long blue surtout descending to my heels, and bedecked with horn buttons almost as large as saucers, and a high-crowned

hat, being amongst the number of Gay's superfluous articles.

I next took a survey of his humble residence, which was, properly, speaking, what I have already called it, a cottage; having in it but five small rooms, and being covered with thatch and washed with a coat of rose-colour; which, with a green door, and two little diamond-cut windows, peeping from a mat of ivy that nearly overspread the front of the mansion, had a pretty effect.

Within, notwithstanding his dislike to rural features, he had tastefully enough selected bed and window curtains of a light green striped stuff; while coarse cloth of a deeper verdure covered the floors both of my sleeping room

and his; and the walls were entirely of a pea-green dye.

In the parlour, on shelves, were ranged the works of two or three hundred well-chosen authors in Greek, Latin, English, Italian, and French; and the sides and top of the fire-place were adorned with several of the merriest productions of *Woodward's* happy pencil.

Behind the house was a garden like that described by Shenstone in his "*School-mistress*," surrounded by an inclosure of holly, laurel, and other evergreens. On observing such a prevalence of Nature's favourite hue, I exclaimed, "Why, Gay, *hic ver assiduum*; I see nothing of the city about you here, though you spout so fluently on the advantages it has over the country."

—"Ay, ay," he replied; "and I *think* what I *say* too: but I love consistency, and cannot conceive how any person should want taste so egregiously as to mingle both, like a certain friend of mine, whose country-house is so completely *townish*, that you would imagine he had transferred it from Berkeley Square to its present situation: it only wants a string of *quart pots* and a letter-man in his scarlet coat at the door, to finish it!"

CHAP. XXV.

Nearer to the twenty-sixth than the first.

I NOW acquainted Gay with my intention of going to Oakley, to make inquiries for my family, with all of whom I found he was intimate: but for some days he would not allow me to leave him; and in conversation, reading, and walking, our hours stole deliciously away.

At length, however, he saw my impatience to visit my father; and pressing ten guineas into my hand, and desiring me to write to him, he escorted me some

miles on my way to the next town, where I intended to take the stage, and so reach my own part of the world.

But after we had parted, I resolved, I hope from a laudable motive, to spare my borrowed money at the expense of my legs, and perform the remainder of my journey on foot; and in this manner I travelled for five days: not indeed luxuriously, in the usual sense of that word; but by no means disagreeably to me, now rendered callous to such petty inconveniencies as would once have vexed me sorely.

Shakspeare says, "*sweet are the uses of adversity:*" often, as I trudged along, heated by the sun and wet with showers, did I think of all that *wretches feel*, and of how little the rich and the proud, who, roll through England in their chariots,

know about it. If I was ill-treated, I paid the less; if insulted by hostlers and landladies, their contempt did me no real harm; and in the various nooks and corners into which I was thrust on my march, nothing worse occurred than now and then an altercation with the rats on whom I intruded.

I had, as I conjectured, nearly reached the end of my journey; when, keeping the middle of the road, just as it grew dark, three men on foot overtook me; and one of them getting before me, asked where I was going. I disliked the tone of his voice, as well as the impertinence of his question, and remained silent. He repeated his demand, and attempted to catch hold of my coat, whilst his companions stopped in my path and obliged me to halt.

I now understood them; and instinctively flourishing a stick of knotted oak which I had in my hand, for a moment they retreated; and this tempted me to do what otherwise I should never have thought of: with a well-aimed blow I knocked down the nearest of them, and began to run; but my villainous long coat impeding me, I fell; and the foremost of my pursuers, for the two followed me, was preparing to strike me with his bludgeon, when something started from the ditch close to where I lay, and alarmed the rogues: at the same moment I heard in a hoarse accent a person exclaim, "Never fear, my hearty! I'll stand by you;" adding, "rot thy eyes and limbs! take that:" and then I perceived that I had an auxiliary, and a stout one; for with ap-

parent ease he overthrew one of my antagonists, and I did as much for the other; then pulling off my surtout and flinging it on my arm, I called to my deliverer to run, and we both fled with the utmost swiftness; soon leaving the enemy and the scene of action far behind us.

We continued the race in silence for nearly a mile, and were then so near the lights of a village that we ventured to slacken our pace, and take breath.

The first use I made of mine, was to thank this generous fellow, who seemed by his dress to be a seaman, for his assistance: "Oh, as for that," said he, "that's nothing; and I should have turned *to* sooner than I did, for I saw the attack, but I was afraid of mistaking my man in the dark, till I observed you bear

away."—"But where," said I, "my friend, did you come from?"—"Out of the ditch, to be sure," he replied: "I took in, do you see, too much beer about an hour ago, and so grew sleepy, and so lay down; and when I awoke, I seed you and the t'others engaged; and though I don't love meddling in other people's business, yet, you know, I could not stand by where there were three to one, and not help the weakest, whether right or wrong."

I renewed my expressions of gratitude to my gallant knight-errant, and proposed his going in with me to the first public house, and taking some refreshment, which he promised he would: "that is," said he, "as far as a pint or two; for I have but a shilling in my pocket!" I told him not to think of

that, as I had plenty; and if he wanted he should share it with me. "Why, ay," cried he, "that's handsome enough of thee; but I can't say as I do stand in any great need, for I am almost at home, where I had friends formerly, and be-like have some yet: *m'hap* you're bound for the same place?"

"I am going," I replied, "to Oakley, in ——shire, and should suppose it cannot be very far off."

"Oakley!" he repeated; "why that's the very place I'm steering for; but it is many a day and year since I was in it, though I was born there; and I an't sure that I should —— why— dang me if that there ben't it! I'll swear to the old church and the doctor's house all the world over."

And Oakley it was; for we were now

entering the village by that part where stood the parsonage, the door of which I could scarcely prevail on myself to pass, my heart beating with violence as I drew nigh enough to observe it distinctly: but I could not think of parting with my brave assistant, after the invitation I had given him; and we accordingly proceeded to the other extremity of the street, where the sign of the Three Pigeons signified (Heaven knows why) that the owner entertained men and horses; and here, desiring to be shown into the best room, I called for a bottle of wine, and held out my hand to my comrade, saying "Welcome home, townsman!" and to my surprise I perceived that he wanted an arm, and that the place of that limb was supplied by a wooden stump with an

iron hook at the end of it. This discovery caused me still more to admire his courage and true magnanimity; nor could I repress a sigh at the reflexion of not having it in my power to serve one, who, poor and disabled as he was, had so valiantly exposed his life for my sake.

I told him my name, however, as we drank our wine; and was going to assure him of my inclination to prove myself his friend, if ever I could; but at hearing what I said, he jumped up, and wringing my hand, exclaimed—"Master Ardent! has't forgot me?—but it is no wonder, when I could forget you. Don't you remember Ned Blunt, your playmate?—Lord! Lord!—well, to be sure! this is funny enough, after all."

And now I began to recal the en-

larged and altered features of my old friend Ned; declaring that I was most heartily glad to meet him once more, and that, if I did not recollect him, he must attribute it to the change which years and hardship had produced in him.

When our bottle was out, he appeared desirous of parting to seek his family; and this I did not oppose, as I myself wished to go to the rectory; but I exacted a promise from him to inquire for me there the next day; and with great difficulty, forced him to take five guineas, which he sternly refused to accept, until I affirmed that I positively gave him the money, not as a recompense, but to help a brother in distress, which he had previously confessed was partly his case.

We then separated; and I hastened back to my father's. When I reached the house, it was, I knew, about that hour of the evening at which, in the cold season, it was customary with our family to assemble in my father's little study, to avoid the cost of a second fire; and there, whilst he read to us, my mother and sisters were generally employed, like the good woman in Robert Burns's "Saturday Night," with scissars and needle, in making old clothes look almost as well as new ones; brother Dick's office, as the youngest, being to snuff the candles and answer the door.

I approached the window of this apartment, the shutters of which were but partly closed, and peeping in, saw the expected group actually seated and

occupied as I had left them the evening before my departure: my fears for their safety were therefore over, and I knocked gently. Dick attended the summons, and desired to know my business; and when I had pronounced about three words in reply, though he did not at first remember my voice, it was not so with the good people inside, who rose *en masse*; my mother and sisters rushing forth to greet me, and my father following. When our mutual salutations were finished, which was not the case for some minutes, I found myself again in possession of my favourite corner; my heart swelling with that species of feeling which HOME only can give; and which they who have known what it is to want a home, only can conceive.

My mother and the girls congratu-

lated me on coming back once more; it mattered not why, or in what condition, to live amongst *Christians*; Dick asked what sort of persons the *Blacks* were; and my father requested a brief history of the West Indies.

I need not say that my replies astonished my audience; or that they hearkened with greedy ears to the narrative of my adventures; which I gave them at large, excepting what related to my renewal of acquaintance with Miss Rivers; of whom I made no mention, from the cruel uncertainty that involved that part of my story, and the improbability of my ever again seeing the fair Arabella.

The state of their own circumstances I perceived to be pretty much as formerly: my father's honoured head was

grown whiter; and my mother's eyes, as she told me, were not altogether as strong as they had been thirty years before. Bess, my elder sister, was gaily attired, and gave me to understand that she might have been well married, but preferred living single; both of which circumstances I translated as I thought proper; and the frequent visits paid to and by a neighbouring farmer's family helped me to a comment.

Olivia, the youngest, who prided herself on her resemblance to a picture of Lady Thornhill, was, I must say, a very lovely girl: she was a favourite with every one, and chiefly with me; and as she may make her appearance again, I cannot omit this opportunity of describing her. Without being tall, she seemed to be so, from the extreme deli-

cacy and symmetry of her shape. Neither painter nor sculptor ever imagined any thing more graceful than her head and neck; or displayed more taste in dressing the hair of a Venus or a Diana, than she did in rolling up her light tresses in the style of one of those Roman gems so much praised by the best judges. Her coral lips were so enchanting, that one could hardly look from them to admire her beauteous teeth; and her eyes were of the colour of that heavenly blue one sometimes sees in an April sky, and possessed infinite expression. In her disposition she was gentle even to timidity; and very silent in company; which gave rise to a complimentary poem addressed to her by a neighbouring curate, wherein he declares that her silence is assumed out of

mercy to both sexes; to spare ours from the shafts of her wit, and her own from dying of envy. But my mother assured me the poet had no chance, for that Livy took after herself, and was very high-minded.

Poor Dick, who was neither man nor boy, was principally engaged in transcribing sermons for my father, studying Greek grammar, and practising "the Noble Race of Shenkin" on a bad fiddle.

They were all full of an event which happened a fortnight before; when a letter had been received from my brother, who had gone to sea, and was now a lieutenant of a frigate that had the good fortune to take a prize of great value; and he being enriched in consequence, had sent my father fifty pounds:

but this particular he withheld from me for some time, out of a principle of tenderness, that I might not feel hurt at the comparison; and when communicated, every thing that could sooth me was added by him: he assuring me that he pitied but did not blame me for all that had occurred; that he knew my heart was a good one; and would make every effort to throw me into some situation befitting a gentleman.

But this delicacy afflicted me more than if I had been upbraided for my wildness and want of conduct; and determined me speedily to depart for London, that I might not be an additional burden on him: and this I resolved to do under pretence of an invitation from a powerful friend there who was pledged to serve me. I considered this as a pious

deception, if to deceive can be excusable, because I had no right to encroach on a kind father's liberality; and indeed I thought that I ought not to fly from hardships, but rather inflict them on myself, as a punishment for the levity of my youth.

My anecdote of Blunt, who called upon me as I requested, ingratiated him with every individual of our household; and before I left the country, my father used his interest so successfully for him as afterwards to promote his marriage with the daughter of a respectable man at Oakley; on whom he had fixed his young heart, but at the time was forced to go to sea, to avoid a prosecution for poaching; and I heard with pleasure of his being soon settled in his native village, and thriving fast.

When I announced my intention of going to town, my father did not attempt to dissuade me from the measure, conceiving it likely to prove advantageous; and on my taking leave of him and the family, he gave me twenty guineas; desiring me, if my prospects were not flattering, to return to him directly, instead of exposing myself, as I had once done, to drudgery and distress, in what he termed the modern Babylon. Shortly after I again bid adieu to the parsonage-house, and was transported on the roof of the heavy coach to the Swan with Two Necks in Lad Lane; where I slept on the night of my arrival, and formed something of a plan for the future.

My first step was to secure a lodging; and this, from my thorough know-

ledge of the city, I was now enabled to obtain on terms still more economical than formerly, paying but three shillings a week for an attic apartment at a printer's in Little Eastcheap; for a description of which I beg permission to refer my curious reader to the poetical sketch of an author's bedchamber by Goldsmith, who is therein supposed to have described his own. And, indeed, I am not without a suspicion that mine was the very room honoured by being the dwelling of that immortal bard; and that it was in *statu quo*, with the exception of a mezzotinto of the brave Earl Howe, the hero of the day, in lieu of Prince William's lamp-blacked face.

I next proceeded to search for Dyer, without any great hope of finding him; though not without reflecting on the vast

difference it would make to me, in regard to my happiness, if disappointed of the society of so learned and virtuous a friend, and so agreeable a companion.

But though I sought him for several days in all his haunts, not omitting the benches in St. James's Park, my inquiries were fruitless; and my attempts to trace out Lieutenant Orlop equally so.

CHAP. XXVI.

Signifies that five-and-twenty chapters preceded it.

I HAD given them both up, when one night, as I mounted the last flight of stairs, and was going into my *den*, I thought that amongst the voices I heard in the printing-room, I distinguished one not altogether new to me; and as I wished to inspect an evening paper, I made that an excuse for knocking at the door. It was opened by some person, who desired me to walk in; and there, by the light of a lamp,

and seated at a small table with a pen in his mouth, and a *proof* sheet before him, I beheld—Dyer. I advanced to him, and stood still till he should lift his eyes from the paper; which at length he did, and stared at me with an aspect of doubt and alarm; whilst the other men seemed not less astonished; particularly when, rubbing his face and eyes with his inky fingers, and rising slowly, he pronounced my name. "Yes," I cried; "it is I myself—unless you are resolved to believe me in Jamaica!"

Never was philosophy thrown more off its guard: his expressions of joy were more violent than even those of Gay; for (as I presently found) he had been wofully buffeted by adversity during our separation: and it is the wretch

alone who knows the ecstatic pleasure of recovering a *friend.*

My own satisfaction, as may be supposed, equalled his; and it was enlarged when I heard him say that he was my fellow-lodger, and inhabited the room next to mine; to which we immediately adjourned, and procuring some porter, sat almost till morning; consuming the hours in unreserved accounts of our mutual mishaps.

In mine there was some variety; but his exhibited scarcely any thing except days and nights of such toil as the bookseller's hack only endures; and of which none besides can form a competent idea.

Though endowed with abilities of the highest kind, correct in his morals,

and moderate in all his desires, he was one of those with whom, by a sort of fatality, nothing succeeded; and was a living refutation of an opinion which prevails, that men are invariably the authors of their own fortunes, whether good or bad. Calumny, springing from the avarice and meanness of some of his family, had deprived him in his youth of a property he would otherwise have inherited from a relation, who intended to make him his heir, but was a weak and credulous recluse, who believed whatever he heard; and Dyer's calumniators took care he should only glean from them such accounts of the young man as favoured their own views; by which means they intercepted the independence designed for him, and drove him

into the world to seek subsistence as he could.

The pen naturally became his resource; but, to paraphrase the poet's thought, "he at whose heels poverty is suspended, finds it hard to keep his head over water." The fruit of one day's labour was wasted in purchasing the privilege of living through the next. He had written many ingenious pamphlets, and executed several translations with uncommon spirit: but the profit of these fell to the publisher; whilst the credit of them was transferred to some happier name; and he barely existed by his talents and assiduity.

How little do the lazy, diseased, and dissipated women or men of fashion think of his sufferings and his wants,

whose genius delights, and (were that possible) would reform them; whose effusions add new charms to their bowers of luxury, and sooth them on the couch of sickness or sorrow!—"Ah," as Dyer pleasantly said, "how often have I, in harmonious prose or mellifluous verse, constructed pavillions and laid out pleasure grounds in a cock-loft of the Borough; amidst the yelling of a tailor's progeny in the adjoining room, and the battering of pin-makers beneath me!—ay, and bestowed titles and estates with unbounded profusion, though unable to pay a shilling to the milk-man; who has stood impatient for my answer, whilst I was settling a jointure of twelve hundred a year on some of my inferior personages!"

"Come," said I, "let us not be dis-

spirited, but, in the name of Midas, try what can be done: through the aid of Type, or some such fellow, we shall get employment, and convert a few sheets of paper into guineas."

"To Type," he drily replied, "I beg you will not think of applying in our exigencies: by this time, "*a body of politic worms are e'en at him*," as he has been some weeks in St. Pancras' church-yard; but I think I know of a quarter in which something may be done." And here we separated, to sleep away our cares.

At our meeting next day, we had a good deal of serious conversation on the important subject of ways and means; Dyer assuring me that he foresaw a turn of affairs for the better in my prospects, and endeavouring, though indeed in

vain, to raise my hopes respecting Miss Rivers. I say vainly, for I could not be persuaded that she was in safety, from the accounts of continental proceedings with which the papers abounded; nor could I suppose but that she would attribute my sudden desertion to a motive of selfishness; or flatter myself that I should ever see her more.

We however mutually tried to encourage one another; and were not idle in regard to the main point, of getting engaged to write for a magazine or newspaper; and at length thought ourselves fortunate in procuring an appointment of that sort, which produced to both of us rather less than a dust-man or scavenger could have earned in the week;—and I am sorry to say our gains

were not at all more reputably acquired.

We abused and applauded authors, actors, cabinets, and ministers, indiscriminately; published dispatches on Monday, for the sake of contradicting them on Tuesday; and immolated whole armies, that we might afterwards bring them to life.

Our combined efforts would not have been sufficient during several weeks to have maintained us, had I not appropriated part of my father's donation to our use, instead of applying it to the payment of my debt to Gay. But I wrote him an honest statement of my situation; and in reply received from him a friendly scolding for my scruples, which, because it ought to have made

me more eager to return him his money, had the contrary effect.

By way of an occasional relaxation, my coadjutor proposed that we should enrol ourselves in a club which met twice a week at a neighbouring public-house, and went by the style and title of the *Anythingarians;* implying, I presume, that so there were but a club, it mattered not of what ingredients it consisted; and to do them justice (for we were gladly admitted to join the society), the world could scarcely have produced such another collection of originals.

On a full night we amounted at least to twenty; assembled at eight o'clock; and were regulated by laws written in large letters, and fixed behind the president's chair. These professed to be

a code drawn up by a committee chosen for the purpose, who were guarantees for the strict observance of it; and conclude by a declaration that they thereunto pledge *themselves*, having already pledged every thing else they were worth. And this was, I am afraid, something more than a stroke of humour; for I really believe the aggregate properties of the association, leaving out their brains but including their clothes, would not have sold for forty shillings.

By excluding their intellects from this rough calculation, I must be supposed to insinuate that there was a considerable portion of genius and learning amongst them; and in this respect some of them were not deficient: they were still less so in what Dyer called the art

of *white-washing* their own histories, in which they appeared to be a body of ill-used and persecuted luminaries, from whom the world—had the world known its own interest—might have derived amazing advantages. But, to confess the truth, this was not strictly the fact; as a summary of two or three of the leading characters in this extraordinary club, will serve to show.

Mr. Oliver Endless, who was president on the first night of our joining the party, was, for instance, imbued with such a faculty for talking as almost exceeds credibility: a specimen of the display he made upon the above-mentioned occasion will give some notion of the torment he usually inflicted on his audience.

I should previously observe, that, for

his misfortune—or rather that of his friends—he was married to a lady remarkable for being somewhat of a termagant, and very loquacious; and his tongue, debarred of its proper share of exercise at home, took so much the more when its owner was abroad.

He began, I remember, by observing that provisions were dear and money scarce; propositions, to which, as the company could not dispute them, he had not any reply. Or probably they recollected that contradiction would but prolong what they wished to put an end to. At all events, Endless took special care not to leave much room for question or remark on the part of others; but ran over every imaginable commonplace topic with a fluency as astonishing as it was troublesome. All subjects

seemed equal to him; all æras, all climates: had he possessed Aladin's lamp, he could not have flown from one region to another with greater velocity. Without checking, except to draw breath, he discussed the embassy to China, the destruction of the Bastile, the rebellions of fifteen and forty-five, and the taxation of the colonies; inserting, between these articles, episodes of copper bottoms, chop-sticks, hard frosts, mad dogs, national cockades, kangaroos, dwarfs, giants, petrefactions, and locusts; and had arrived at the second floor of a beaver's house, when the clock announced the hour for breaking up the meeting. Notwithstanding which, he was dexterous enough to introduce a short essay on Harrison's time-piece,

whilst he was taking down his hat and searching for his bamboo.

Mr. Tempest was another of our members, who, they said, had once been a man of some substance, and received a gentleman's education, but was such a slave to the passion of anger, that before he was five-and-twenty he had violated every social and moral obligation. He terrified a lady, to whom he paid his addresses, so much, that he lost her; and then becoming insane with vexation, discharged his servants, demolished his furniture, and, contrary to the advice of two eminent barristers, went to law with a distant relation, who prevailed, and reduced him to ruin: and had not this happened, he was resolved to prosecute his own lawyers for the

loss of his suit. He now subsisted by taking in subscriptions for an essay on the "suaviter in modo," which his friends pretended to believe him employed in writing.

A third remarkable person in this galaxy of perfections, was one Shake, who supported the credit of Poet's Corner in a morning paper of some celebrity; and was weak enough to be imposed upon by a piece of waggery of my friend Dyer, who proposed writing his life in the style of Doctor Johnson; which being mentioned to this favourite of Apollo, was thankfully accepted; and at a full meeting, the sketch of this *morceau* of biography was, at his own request, gravely read by the malicious author.

The whole of it I cannot recollect;

but part of the composition was as follows, the conclusion being lost in noise and laughing.

"Of Jonathan Shake much has been said which never gained credit, and much believed which was never known. Through the medium of village misrepresentation, opposed by impediments from garrulous senility, the giddiness of immaturity, and the surliness of manhood, I have long searched for traces of him whom these pages profess to commemorate; and with some confidence can declare that the search has not been in vain.

"The father of Jonathan Shake was Nicodemus Shake, a non-conformist shoemaker; of whom nothing more is known, but that he had an inordinate propensity to eating black-puddings.

"He lived not to enjoy the reputation of Jonathan, who received the rudiments of literature from the schoolmistress of his native hamlet; and soon displayed that prominency of character, and energy of intellect, which ever distinguish genius from petulance, and vigour from imbecility.

"It is difficult to point out the moment when the bud of emulation blossoms into action: thus much, however, is certain; that to the list of beardless candidates for emolument and applause, may be added the name of Jonathan Shake.

"At fourteen years old, when others are pursuing the gyrations of the top, or poring over the progress of the marble, this man found his occupation in correcting the errors of rustic psalmody;

and at a more advanced age, such was the activity of his mind, that he at one and the same time paid his court to a dairy-maid and to the Muses.

"His suit was not rejected; though it was his fortune to be a husband without becoming a parent.

"He was of the smallest size; but was short without being dwarfish, and fat without being unwieldy.

"Amongst the pieces attributed to him, four ballads and a hymn are all he ever acknowledged; and in the latter, some imputation of ignorance will I fear remain to him, for asserting the existence of pistols and pomatum in the reign of King David."——

At this place it became impossible to hear any thing further of this biographical *chef-d'œuvre*, for the shouts of

affected admiration that filled the room; and which Jonathan seemed to take in such good part, that, in recompense for his complacency, he was excused from paying his share of the reckoning.

To avoid prolixity, I shall specify but one more rarity in this eccentric museum: Mr. Caleb Wander, whose singularities afforded Dyer and some others perpetual amusement.

Every person has heard of men who are what is termed *absent* in company; but it was the privilege of this worthy to be (if I may use the expression) rather too often *present*; his imagination dwelling so much on words, that he was unable to continue a conversation himself, and spoiled the attempts of others. No sooner did a particular expression strike his ear, than his thoughts pursued

the image suggested, and his tongue gave them utterance. For example; the phrase sublime instantly gave rise to a view of the character of Edmund Burke, or an essay on Longinus: if any one spoke of the tombs of Westminster Abbey, the Pyramids of Egypt made their appearance; and to hear Bath mentioned without his introducing Seneca, was not in Caleb's power. Cook's voyages were interrupted by an analysis of the structure of Noah's Ark; and from the word bull sprung up a treatise on the hierarchy, or a quotation from Pope's works.

Should an auction be the topic, it put him in mind of Lucian; and if not stopped by some one, he would most ingeniously digress from *himself;* and Lucian sending him to the Pantheon, he soon found his way, no one knew how,

back to London and his wife, and thence, by the way of divorces, to John Milton and the Long Parliament: thus rendering it impossible for any one to ascertain the original subject of discourse!

This curious assembly was nevertheless an agreeable resource, as it helped us all to forget for a few hours our weightier ills; and for about sixpence each, we had the enjoyment of society, which is always preferable to solitude, unless where vice intrudes.

Of the remaining members I have not now leisure to take particular notice; though I am persuaded that amongst them a good dramatic genius would readily have discovered what the British stage is so greatly in want of: I mean, new characters for our comic person-

ages; and more than once Dyer told me he had thought of making use of them for the purpose, but feared to give himself unnecessary trouble, from the difficulty a stranger would have in getting his piece brought forward, although written agreeably to the rules of Mr. M. and Mr. R. and Mr. &c.; and the certainty of having it rejected, should the board of management discover that Nature had been the author's study. But I urged him notwithstanding to make the attempt, and insinuated that it was possible the board might not find him out.

CHAP. XXVII.

Will be esteemed the best by those who think it so.

I FEEL it a task entirely too painful to retrace the varieties of mortifications, and distresses of every complexion, endured by my companion and myself for several months, during which we continued dragging the literary sand-cart. Confinement, unwholesome food, and despondency, contributed to alter our appearances so lamentably, that I do not believe either of us could have been remembered at first sight by our nearest

relations. Dyer looked like the Lay Brother in the Duenna; and me he used to compare to the forlorn Cardenio. And indeed I *was* forlorn; and occasionally experienced sensations of such bitter anguish, as, though too common to the unhappy and obscure, were to me almost intolerable.

I thought incessantly of Arabella, but every day with new feelings of regret and despair: at one time imprecating curses on myself for having ever raised my thoughts to her; at another weeping over the recollection of her lovely person and elegant mind.

I was, besides, still—and I fear shall always be—tormented by the stings of false and childish pride; which made it dreadful to me to go, as I was sometimes obliged, into the fashionable ave-

nues at the court end of the town; where I was sure to meet, though not to be acknowledged by, many a gay acquaintance of former days; and was particularly wounded by the sight of Markham; who, as I understood from some of the tradesmen in this quarter, was one of the constant butterflies of Bond Street.

The splendor of his equipage, his dress, his smooth countenance, and the men of *ton* who usually hung upon his arm, all announced that prosperity, which should have belonged—I will not say to myself—but surely to Dyer or Gay, according to my father's hypothesis; not to this despicable, and depraved, and mindless animal.

My dislike to frequent the purlieus

of St. James's was unfortunate for me, as the sequel will evince; but I knew it not; and all I do know is, that I was born to be the sport of chance, if—excusing the paradox—it can be admitted that ever man was born to such a destiny.

Accident had once given me Dyer for my friend; and on my return to England had restored him to me, as a counterpoise to afflictions which would, I am confident, have been too heavy for me, had he not shared the burden.

Of this advantage I was now doomed to be deprived. I had been employed in my room reading the news of the day, and was reflecting mournfully on the details which the papers contained of the destruction of the royalist-faction,

in La Vendée; I had paid the tribute of my tears to the heroic fall of my gallant friend De B., who, after performing such feats of valour as drew on him the encomiums even of his enemies, had, as he wished to do, died in the field. With him too had died the spirit of his party, who were all either dispersed or slain; and the district reduced to subjection. Of course I could not any longer hope for the safety of her I loved; and I was really in a state bordering upon distraction, when Dyer entered, and having condoled with me, informed me that he was going to accept an offer made to him, of becoming head-assistant at an academy near town; adding, that he deplored the necessity which obliged him to take on himself so toilsome an

office, but thought it better than labour little inferior, and actual famine.

It would have been ungenerous in me to have opposed this plan for the sake of my own comfort; I therefore encouraged him in the undertaking, though my heart seemed to wither in my bosom at the notion of being left alone—A strange expression for a man dwelling with a million of his fellow-creatures around him; but exceedingly just notwithstanding: for, as it has been said, a poor man may be very solitary in the city of London, and very hungry though lodging near Fleet Market!

In a couple of days Dyer took his departure; and I was compelled to write and starve on for weeks without him. But, melancholy seized upon me:

the powers of my understanding decayed; and listless and inefficient, instead of using my pen, I had passed the whole of one day extended across my wretched bed; and am ashamed to acknowledge, that when I started up and walked into the street, it was not, I fear, so much with a design of breathing the air of heaven, as of seeking in the waters of the Thames an oblivion of my sorrows!

With something of this iniquitous, ungrateful, and cowardly design in my mind, I wandered for several hours, I knew not where, and had already traversed Westminster Bridge three or four times. It was considerably past one o'clock; the streets on every side were deserted: without, all was tran-

quil; within my breast the storm was wild. The comparison between what I might have been, and what I was, maddened me; and standing at the foot of the bridge, I threw my eyes, now on the glorious vault above my head, *fretted with golden fires*; and now on the sullen tide below, irresolute and staggering with the violence of my emotions; when I heard some one call loudly for help, and perceived the figures of men near me. Though at the moment I was as incapable of fear as of reasoning clearly, I wish to believe that it was humanity made me run towards them: one of them held another with his back pressed close to the battlements of the bridge, and seemed endeavouring to suppress his voice by grasping his throat;

a third stepped from them, and met me with his arm presented; but I passed him suddenly, and with my hand, for I was without any weapon, struck his companion so severe a blow on the head as to make him let go his hold and reel: this released the person attacked, and we both turned upon the assailants, who however ran at the approach of a watchman, and left us uninjured and masters of the field; the engagement not lasting much longer than I have been in relating it.

He whom I was thus instrumental in rescuing, appeared by his dress, as far as I could discern it, to be a young man of some distinction. His manners were genteel; and he expressed his thanks to me with so much politeness as to make me think he rated the service I

had done him too highly. I therefore requested he would not consider my interference in any other light than as a common act; and, forgetting alike my troubles and the poverty of my apparel, advised him to hasten home, and proposed to accompany him.

He thanked me for the offer very cordially; took my arm; and as we hurried along towards the Horse-Guards, repeatedly said how much he was obliged. "I am, sir," he continued, "so great a stranger to the habits of this part of the world, that I have not only incautiously staid from my lodging beyond the hour of security, but have ventured to return alone, without arms, and with a great sum of money in my pocket."

I was a good deal surprised at this

information, but more so at the frankness with which the gentleman informed me of the latter circumstance: but as we proceeded, this was accounted for, by his mentioning that he was very lately come to Europe, having left England when a boy; and that he knew no more of London and its practices, than a native of that city, who has never travelled, does of Pekin: and indeed but little reflexion is required to convince us of the difference there is between reading and hearing of a city or country, and living in it.

We had arrived at the end of Pall Mall, and were turning into St. James's Street, the place of the stranger's abode being in that neighbourhood, when we both at the same moment saw behind us,

and nearly opposite to Carlton House, several flashes of red light; and concluding that a fire had broken out, made haste back to the spot; and there found that some watchmen, and a few of the neighbours, had collected in front of a magnificent mansion; one of the chimnies of which was on fire; and from the cries and confusion of the inhabitants, we had reason to believe that the flames had communicated with some of the lower apartments. Many persons appeared at the upper windows; but none at those beneath; and shortly after, a sash above was burst open, and a man called out for assistance.

By an accident, not uncommon, but very fortunate, against a house, within a door of that where the danger was,

stood a high ladder, left untied by the masons: this five or six of the bystanders easily removed, and placed so as to afford those who were so terrified some chance of safety. Efforts had been made to break open the hall door without effect; the engines were not yet come; and the smoke issued from under one of the drawing-room windows: there was therefore no time to lose; and the people having called in vain to those above, to attempt reaching the ladder and descend, the strange gentleman and I agreed to mount and encourage them. We were warned of the danger by several; but being determined, I went first, as having proposed it, and was followed by the other.

We were not long in getting to the

second floor; and clambered in, with considerable hazard, at one of the windows of an apartment filled with maid servants and men in liveries; and in the midst of them——but Heavens! with what astonishment, apprehension, and rapture did I behold her—Miss Rivers!

Terror had subdued her strength so completely, that she was not to be prevailed on to try and step upon the ladder: to carry her to it was impracticable; and her servants declared they would not desert her.

'I was too much agitated with fear on her account to regard ceremony, but took her hand, and, in conjunction with my resolute Indian acquaintance, besought her to exert herself, and allow us to assist her to descend the ladder;

though I doubt whether that would have been possible. But our exhortations were useless; and happily the attempt became unnecessary, as whilst we employed our entreaties the engines had arrived, and extinguished the fire; and the people having at length forced open the street door, two or three respectable persons of the neighbourhood had come up stairs, and announced safety to all, at the expense of some broken windows and the destruction of a few articles of furniture.

When this was known, and fear had given place to tranquillity, the stranger and I were loaded with the thanks of every one, particularly of Arabella, and a very pretty young lady, who seemed to be her companion, but whom as yet

I had scarcely noticed, though neither she nor the lovely mistress of my heart, in the dishabille of night dresses, were objects to be overlooked at any other time.

It was not a moment for explanation; and good-breeding and discretion prompted us to withdraw, after we had seen order somewhat restored by the servants; one of whom, just as we reached the street, followed us with his lady's request that we would do her the favour to call when convenient;—a message we both promised to attend to, though I suspect from very distinct motives.

Arabella, I could observe, was struck with more than ordinary wonder at my unexpected appearance, my worn-out clothes and emaciated form; and though

she gazed eagerly on me, she seemed yet more to examine the person of him who accompanied me; and as we took our leave, she lay, pale as ashes, with her head upon the bosom of her friend, and waved her hand in silence to us both.

Intimacies are not always the growth of time only; and circumstances will as suddenly create as destroy them. The transactions of the night had made the Indian, as I long continued to call him, and myself, in some measure friends; and when we came to the door of the hotel, where he intended to sleep, he pressed me to go in with him: but as I could not pay for a bed I objected to this, and said I thought it too near day to lie down: in which he agreed, but

insisted on my sitting with him, and talking over the recent occurrence.

With this proposal I complied, both from my wish to be further acquainted with him, and from a sort of dread which inspired me of encountering my own thoughts in the gloomy mood I was then in.

On entering the coffee-room, we placed ourselves near the fire; and the stranger having ordered some hot wine, began by remarking that every one could not boast, as he could, of getting into two such scrapes in one night, and getting out of them unhurt; "But you, good sir," said he, "have really played your part most handsomely: you first saved my money; next ventured your neck to save two pretty women, and,

unless I am much mistaken, to make one of them fall in love with you. I perceive she was previously your acquaintance, and will not be sorry to thank you after she has consulted her looking-glass to-morrow—or, I believe I should say to-day, for it is past three o'clock."

I knew not what answer to make; and he went on: "Tell me, how is all this? Do not take offence at my freedom, but explain why it is that I see a gentleman, whose appearance and qualifications are such as yours, in raiment which distress only should wear.—Excuse me a moment longer," he continued, observing I was going to speak, "and do not imagine me capable of saying this from a vulgar motive of prying into the secrets of another: my means

are very ample; my purse at your service; and my friendship, if you will accept it, I also offer you, persuaded that it cannot be misplaced. Besides, to encourage you, I shall, with your leave, freely tell you in a few words who I am. I am, then, an adventurer, and totally alone in the world; but one on whom Fortune has smiled. I have already told you that I left England when a boy: this is but the fourth day since my return to it, after an absence of many years, during which I endured some misfortunes, not necessary to trouble you with at present; and then obtaining a lucrative situation in the East Indies, amassed, I hope honourably, money enough to afford me the enjoyments of life in my own country; to which,

as my love of pleasure exceeds my love of gold, I have returned before age or sickness have impaired my faculties.

"Of my family I have heard nothing whatever for such a number of years, that I suppose there is not one of them remaining: yet should an only sister, whom I fondly loved in childhood, be still living, her society would in some degree recompense me for the loss of my parents, and agreeably diminish that sense of cheerless independence which I foresee will otherwise deprive me of happiness."

I first thanked him for his polite and generous offers, and for the confidence he had reposed in me; and then, acquainting him with my name, repeated such particulars of my story as would I

thought amuse him; leaving out, however, many parts of importance to myself; but, conscious that this proceeding was disingenuous, begged he would allow me until the following evening to answer some of his questions; as by that time I should be able to inform him whether I stood on the brink of ruin and despair, or of felicity.

He several times exclaimed that my reply was exceedingly mysterious; but that, although he could not step between me and the affliction I might apprehend, he should consider it unkind if pecuniary difficulties made any part of the uneasiness I suffered. I again requested him to suspend his inquiries for some hours, and said, that as it was now day, I should retire to my lodging for a little

while, and return in sufficient time to attend him to the house of the lady in Pall Mall.

"Why," said he, "I thank you; but I really have no great inclination to pay the visit so immediately: in a day or two perhaps I may go: but as you are an acquaintance, and may have some private business with the taller of the two, you can call, and afterwards let me know the event, if you will take so much trouble; for I must candidly tell you, that I came to England to be free, and relish not the plan of fetters, even those of love, so soon after my arrival.—Plague on the little fair-haired seraph, and her graceful attitudes, and tremors, and clinging about my neck! I cannot drive her from my recollection.——No, Mr.

Ardent; go by yourself. I have no idea of being taken prisoner in this manner by panting bosoms and taper fingers; and all without the common civility of a warning!"

Perplexed as I was, I could not resist laughing at this queer *semi*-soliloquy; and told him I positively would not go without him; or if I did, it should be to fetch his seraph to see him before he had washed his face; which was, together with his hands and clothes, as well as my own, begrimed with smoke: and then, he promising to have breakfast ready for me against my return, I left him, and repaired to my city lodging.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Which, as being the last, contains the conclusion.

I NOW put myself into the best dress I possibly could; though so much agitated by various feelings, that I scarcely knew what I was doing. I cannot say whether I was miserable or happy; but I know that I was almost crazed: I applied my shaving brush to my teeth, and about an ounce of charcoal dentifrice to my chin; and I concluded that the devil was certainly in the buttons of

my waistcoat, from the obstinacy with which they refused to do their duty. At last the affair was adjusted; and though I did not look quite so like a footpad as the night before, yet I can assure my gentle reader I was by no means a beau.

I hurried back to the hotel, and there found the stranger dressed and waiting for me: but no sooner had I set eyes upon him than I saw, what could not before have struck me, a most extraordinary resemblance in countenance and form to Arabella; and stood breathless and undecided before him. "If it should!" I cried; "can it, sir, can it be possible—is your name Rivers?" He seemed much surprised, and replied that it was his name, and that he imagined

he had already told it to me; then smiling, asked whether he was so unfortunate as to have forgotten an old friend.

I assured him that I never had the pleasure of being known to him; adding, that he strongly resembled one whose name was the same as his, and whom I esteemed beyond comparison more than any person living;—using this subterfuge with a view of doubling his sister's pleasure and his own at the approaching interview: for that he was the brother of Miss Rivers, supposed to be lost, was beyond a doubt. But indeed it cost me some pains to dissemble my thoughts, or even to bear the commotion they excited in my soul; because, admitting that Arabella were at liberty, and still

partial to me, of which I was dubious, I might in her brother have found one who would oppose instead of being the advocate of my presumptuous wishes.

The moment of trial however was at hand; and though too early for a fashionable visit, at twelve I proposed our going to Pall Mall; not without being diverted at Rivers's reluctance, and his jests at my impatience and disregard of etiquette.

We were, I believe, expected; for the instant I knocked, the door flew open; and an orderly old man, not in livery, anticipated my question, and desired us to walk in.

Rivers, declaring he felt extremely awkward at the idea of all this formality, begged of me first to see the lady of

the house, and then send or come down for him, as I thought proper; and said that afterwards he would make the best excuse he could for not appearing immediately when I did.

To this I gladly acceded; and he was shown into a lower room, whilst I sent up only my own name, and had not long to wait for the summons to ascend. In an apartment richly furnished, and not injured by the accident of the preceding night, I found Arabella alone: she rose on my entrance, and in her expressive face displayed the embarrassment of real pleasure and affected coldness: perhaps had it not been my wish to read this in her dear animated countenance, I should not have been so quick-sighted; but read it

I did; and emboldened by the discovery, by the consciousness of not meriting her disesteem, and the happiness I had in store for her when my Indian friend should be introduced, I flew over to her, called her *my* Arabella, seized her hand, and pressed it to my lips. Her eyes then plainly said I was a daring man, and as plainly that she did not think me an undeserving one. In less than three minutes I had explained my situation, and the cause of my abrupt departure from France; towards the end of one more, a tear—but not of sorrow—had trickled down her glowing cheek; and before the conclusion of the fifth, I had kissed it away.

I am fond of love-scenes, but not of describing them; and have therefore

compressed the above into as small a compass as can well be conceived; and indeed I defy *Tacitus* himself to have dispatched a battle in fewer words.

Arabella now inquired for my friend, in a tone of voice which confirmed a notion I had entertained of her having been strangely affected at seeing him.

I replied that he would presently wait on her, but had desired me to attend her first, and prepare her to hear, through him, some account of a brother whose memory I knew was dear to her. At hearing this she trembled greatly, and grew so pale as to alarm me; but recovering herself said, that the sound of my companion's voice, and something in his countenance, had strongly recalled to her the image of her brother; and

that his being able but to speak of one she loved so well, and had so long lamented, would be a gratification;—yet that the accident was surprising, amazing, wonderful! This was my time: I left the room, and finding Rivers, desired him to follow me. When we entered, Arabella was standing near a window; and I whispering her name to him, announced his aloud, and—Nature did the rest.

Seldom has there been a more extraordinary, a more pathetic, or a more interesting exhibition, on the stage or in real life, than what now took place. They sprang into each other's arms; they separated, gazed in silence, embraced again, and mutually wept with delight.

When they became more composed, I was not forgotten, but kindly reproached by both for the deception I had practised; and Rivers assured me, that, as he had it in his power, so was it his intention to be most amply revenged of me; but that he could not be more explicit, until he had first heard the leading circumstances of his sister's life. "Let us not, Arabella," said he, "waste time in conjecturing the cause of our ignorance of even each other's existence, but tell me quickly the meaning of what I see: orphans I know we have long been, and left to the mercy of the world; yet how is it that I perceive you, my Bell, surrounded by the appearance of affluence, without a protector; and dressed in the habit which

affliction puts on, while content and joy sparkle in your eyes? explain this to me, I conjure you."

I rose, and would have retired, but they both refused to let me go; and Arabella said, pointing to me and looking at her brother, "Mr. Ardent has been long my faithful friend, and, under Heaven, the preserver of my life; and if any thing could add to my obligations, his being this day the instrument of our happy re-union has increased my gratitude.

"Hereafter you shall learn what led me to the acquaintance of one whose name, brother, you must remember; old Sir Robert Rivers."—"Perfectly well," he replied; "but he has been dead these many years."—"No," said she;

"not many months: last year I attended him to France, where we remained long enough to witness the entire destruction of the royal interests, and were so fortunate as to escape in safety on board of an English ship of war. Soon after our return to England, Sir Robert, who was extremely old, was attacked by illness in this house, and in three weeks expired; leaving me (I can hardly believe it myself) in possession of a small estate in Yorkshire, and of more than one hundred thousand pounds in the funds; with no other restrictions than a request that I would protect a young French lady, whom you saw last night, and who is the daughter of a nobleman deprived of property and life by the troubles in his own country; and also

pay one hundred pounds a-year, Mr. Ardent, to our old friend, M. Marbœuf, who accompanied us to England."

We both of course expressed our wonder and satisfaction at this singular narrative; though I greatly doubt the sincerity of my congratulations, for reasons not necessary to dwell on; nor was my trepidation lessened as she thus continued:—"My happiness, unluckily, does not depend on riches, but on the will of one to whom in an unguarded moment, but within consecrated walls —I gave my heart; and whose pride is such that I suppose he would refuse my hand, though I were to request his acceptance of it;" saying which words, she extended it to me with the air of a person who designed to leave it in my

possession, if I chose to keep it. Never having heard of any one in my circumstances refusing such an offer, I had no precedent for rejecting it; and so, in my confusion, said something which I cannot precisely now remember, but it implied rather more than a half-consent; and her brother taking both our hands in his, joined them together: when, instead of embracing that moment to draw myself out of such a dilemma, I fear I made matters worse, by throwing my arms round Arabella's lovely neck, and acknowledging that her behaviour was to me the signal of unmerited and unutterable joys.

"When you have done kissing one another," said Rivers, "I have a piece of intelligence, Ardent, to communicate

to you, and Arabella may listen, if she thinks fit;" and pulling from his pocket a bundle of parchments, tied with red—or—black tape—indeed I cannot be positive which, but I believe it was red—he loosed the string, and separating several memorandums, said, that on leaving India, and declaring his intention, when he reached England, of visiting ——shire, he was desired to be the bearer of papers addressed to the care of an agent in London, for the advantage of the eldest surviving son of the reverend Howel Ardent of Oakley, for whom he was to make strict inquiries: "In short," said he, "I have, without making any inquiries at all, but merely by being stopped by robbers on Westminster Bridge, found the very person whom I

should have sought for; and am now to inform you, Mr. Ardent, that remittances have been made by the English agents of the late Mr. Philip Ardent, your uncle, as he terms himself, which will allow of your dressing a little better than you do at present; and in some degree preserve your dignity from the degradation of being solely the obliged party in your compact with Arabella. I knew this before we set out to-day upon our visit; but instinct induced me to suppress the information, and inclined me to plot against you, whilst you were laying a trap for me."

He then asked me if my uncle was not thought rather a particular man in our family; and on my admitting that he was, he proceeded: "There is an in-

junction respecting this legacy which you may think unpleasant. Your benefactor enriches you on condition that you take the surname of a Russian lady to whom he was attached, and whose familiar appellation was Kyrillounamaritchkinawischniewolotscthokk." To which I replied, that I had not the least objection, provided Arabella had none; and she remarked that it would look mighty pretty on a ticket.

In serious fact, then, my uncle had by his will made me his heir, and that to the extent of more than fifteen hundred pounds a-year!

My triumph was now great indeed; but I can honestly affirm, that my first emotion of pleasure, on discovering that I was wealthy, arose from the idea of

giving ease and happiness to my dear and venerable parents in their old age; and in addition to this was the delightful and flattering reflexion of Arabella's disinterested love.

I had, besides, a design of first astonishing Dyer and Gay, and then of serving them both essentially. In short, such a refiner of the human heart is prosperity, that all my projects were of a generous cast; and I believe I almost wished Markham in distress, that I might relieve him. It so happened, however, that with regard to him my charity was not put to the test; but I was, on the contrary, in a short time obliged to mortify him, by a daily display of health, wealth, and happiness, as much superior to any thing he ever enjoyed,

as a draught of water to a thirsty man is more grateful than to one who had never been dry.

Rivers and I were now ordered to withdraw, but invited to return to dinner; when Arabella promised her brother the company of the young emigrant, and me the indulgence of again seeing my old friend Marbœuf.

Great were my ecstacies; too great for words, and even for thought. We hastened together, without speaking, to the hotel; and there shutting ourselves up in a room, sat for nearly half an hour in a state of silent rapture; the happiness I experienced being but little superior to that of my companion, to whom his native land now opened a thousand new and delicious prospects.

When I could collect myself sufficiently, I resolved, in the first instance, to take Dyer by surprise, and afterwards Gay; and finally, when secure in the possession of my Arabella, to pay a visit to Oakley, and introduce her to my family. This being decided on, I obtained money from Rivers, and returned to my lodging, discharged my debts, and left my address; and in a hackney-coach removed the few articles I was worth to the hotel: after which, having some time to spare, we went together to my uncle's agent, who put the business in such a train as to afford me a certainty of arranging every thing in a few days at farthest; and in the interim accommodated me with a thousand pounds for my present expenses.

It is needless to say that our recep-

tion in Pall Mall was a warm one, or that the day passed rapidly over. The good Marbœuf embraced me with the fervour and affection of a parent; and Mademoiselle La Rive, (who endeared herself to Rivers and me by her fond attachment to Arabella) spoke English tolerably, and added to a pretty little figure, and a really beautiful face, not only the charms of vivacity peculiar to her country, but a sweet voice and great skill in music; and committed such depredations on Rivers's heart as to convince me that she will shortly be the sister-in-law of her protectress.

I have already said that Arabella had a pure and noble mind; and was consequently incapable of so far mistaking vice for virtue, as to imagine prudery or affectation becoming. She therefore rea-

dily indulged me with a private audience, and graciously acquiesced in my proposal of a speedy union; for which I thanked her with more kisses than I have now, in this the closing scene of my memoirs, leisure to enumerate; and soon after, her brother and I went away.

Just as we were at home, I thought I saw, by the light of a shop window, the face and figure of Dyer; and requesting Rivers to step in before me, turned round, and tapped my friend on the shoulder. He knew me directly; and with one of his sorrowful smiles, asked what, in the name of wonder, I was about in that polite quarter of the town; adding, that I could not retort the question, for he was but that instant

arrived, and proceeding to look for me in Eastcheap. As it was not very late I determined to amuse myself with him, and begged he would go into the coffee-room, as I had some business to communicate.

He seemed surprised, but complied; and as Rivers was gone to bed, and the place vacant, I had a better opportunity of executing my purpose. When we were seated, I observed that I was very desirous of something to drink; and he replied that it was exactly his own case, but that we ought to go in search of refreshment to a more humble house of entertainment; "for I conclude," said he, with a nod of his head, "that we have not the price of two draughts of porter between us."

To this I made no reply, but called to the waiter for a bottle of madeira and a decanter of water; and on hearing the words, Dyer got up, and stared as he had done when we met in the printing-room: so that I could hardly keep my countenance. But, his astonishment was beyond all description when he saw me take out several bank-notes of fifty pounds each, and pretend to count them. "Heaven and earth!" he cried, "Ardent! what is all this?—has the lottery"——"Yes, my dear friend," said I, "the lottery *has* at last produced us such a prize as will pay for more porter than we shall ever drink, and repay us for all our past deprivations." And I then briefly related enough to set his mind at ease; though

I did not, without much argument, conquer the scruples of his delicacy, at the idea of obligation, even to me, for assistance. I told him I should at another time unfold to him a plan I had formed for his advantage, insisting on his acceptance of a hundred pounds on the spot: and in this I should not have prevailed, but for a question, to which he could only give such an answer as I wished—viz. Whether, if he were in my place, he should not do as I did?

A bed being ordered for him in the house, we drank our wine, while he described, in strong and afflicting terms, the wretchedness he endured as a schoolmaster's assistant; and fairly confessed he had come to town with a determination of again rather employing his pen as

formerly, than any longer lead the life he had lately experienced.

It may easily be conceived with what unfeigned pleasure I felt it in my power to rescue this enlightened and honourable man from his hard fate. I next day introduced him to Rivers; and between us we concerted such a scheme as, without wounding his acute feelings, enabled us shortly after to secure him, for the future, a handsome independence.

As I was meditating in what manner to apprise Gay of the alteration in my circumstances, I received a letter from him, in which, after saying that he knew me to be struggling with difficulties in London, he presses me to come to him, under a variety of obliging pretences;

such as his being in want of society, and requiring the aid of a friend in a matter of some moment, &c.; also mentioning that in a day or two he purposed going upon business to Oakley, where he wished me to meet him.

This was suited to my designs: I answered that I should be there within a certain time: and in less than a week, affairs being expedited by my agents, and a splendid equipage and rich liveries got ready at my request by Rivers, I was blessed with the hand of my incomparable Arabella; who was given away by her brother, in the presence of Mademoiselle la Rive, M. Marbœuf, and my faithful friend Dyer, at St. George's church, Hanover Square; and on the following morning we left town for

Oakley; Mademoiselle la Rive, my brother-in-law, and the good Marbœuf, taking charge of the house in our absence.

We arrived there, by easy stages, in our post-chariot, on a fine sunny day at noon; the approach of such a gay and fashionable machine to the village drawing forth more than half its inhabitants, who could scarcely abstain from shouting at the sight of my beauteous, blushing Arabella. Of myself, whom they did not recognise, they said I was a proper tall man, and a lord. On driving up to the door of the *Three Pigeons*, I discerned a party at some distance, consisting of my father, mother, and sisters, Dick, and Gay, all proceeding slowly in a different direction from that of the inn, and, as I

supposed, going to enjoy the fine weather in a walk that I knew to be a favourite one with our family, and which lay in a rocky field at the river side.

I could not have schemed any thing better than this; and accordingly handing Arabella out of the carriage, requested her, when convenient, to accompany me in search of my humble friends. This she declared her willingness to do instantly, with a grace peculiarly her own; and taking my arm, we walked down the street; not a few spectators gazing on us at a respectful distance; and amongst them, Ned Blunt, who having a seaman's eye, soon discovered me, and with a manly warmth that charmed me, but amazed my smiling partner, ran over to me, and clap-

ping his stump to his hat, by way of politeness, caught one of my hands in his, and cried out, "Master Ardent, don't take it ill if I'm so bold; but, Ma'am" (looking at Arabella), "I can't help it— for I do suppose you're his lady.—And so Heaven has heard mine and my Sal's prayers for him, and sent him prosperity, and what's better, a handsome wife to share it."—At which effusion of good-nature and gallantry Arabella appeared more lovely than ever; and taking the brave tar by the hand, told him she knew her obligations to him already, and hoped his Sal made him as happy as he deserved to be; whilst I slipped twenty guineas into his pocket, and bid him give himself and his wife a holiday for our sakes.

We then continued our walk, and passing the church, saw, as I expected, in the field, the party we were in search of.

It is totally impossible to do justice by description to this interview; or to tell with what irresistible endearments my Arabella ingratiated herself with each happy and astonished individual. I must therefore leave these, and several subsequent occurrences, to the imagination of my readers; premising, that they cannot represent to themselves greater instances of human happiness.

In less than two months Arabella had it in her power to put Gay into possession of a living worth seven hundred pounds a year; when my pretty Olivia became his wife: and I having pur-

chased a property in our own neighbourhood, on which there stood a superb modern house, removed my dear father and his family into it, until the rectory, which he would not leave, was repaired, or rather thrown down and rebuilt on a capital plan; and where I had the proud pleasure of seeing my affectionate mother and him living in their old age, amidst the increasing love and veneration of all around them; my gentle Arabella contributing by every kind and tender attention to their indulgence: nor has she lost their favour by presenting them with a very fine grandson, called by my father's name.

My elder sister's admirer grows so impatient, that I think her heart will not

hold out much longer; and Dick having expressed a wish to wear a scarlet coat, has obtained a cornetcy of dragoons, by the generosity of my brother-in-law.

Could every thing go on as smoothly in the world as in a romance, I should be able to add, that I had received my excellent friend Sowerby under my roof; but fate denied me that enjoyment; for he was scarcely liberated from France when he obtained the command of another ship, and was killed on his own quarter-deck. But, to make me some amends, the papers have bestowed the highest praises lately on the gallant Orlop, who is captain of a frigate, and has for his first lieutenant my brother Howel; of whom he speaks in strong terms of

approbation, in a recent dispatch to the commander in chief.

Ned Blunt has a valuable farm, which I procured him on my land; and by his spirit, industry, and steady attachment to me and mine, shows gratitude that would not disgrace a nobler name.

In the course of a few months, my more than ever amiable Arabella has promised to accompany me in an excursion to Bruce Abbey, which I feel great curiosity to view in its original gloomy state; and afterwards have some intention of fitting it up for a summer residence.

I greatly doubt if any man ever deserved as much felicity, and am almost sure no one has ever enjoyed more than

has fallen to my lot. I am also perfectly persuaded that accident, and not any merit of mine, has produced it; and, indeed, on reviewing the career that I have run, am inclined to attribute my success as much to the cause assigned for it by my mother, as to any thing else; for she often exclaims, "Child, child, happy was the day for you that I persuaded Mr. Ardent to call you after your uncle, and make you the third George of your family." With submission to her, however, I think the fracture which I inflicted on the face of my father's old clerk, is not without its claim on the occasion.

But the truth is, and my father scarcely denies it any longer, that in this world our adversity and prosperity

have little or nothing to do with our upright or evil deportment; the recompense of the former, and the punishment of the latter, being reserved for that future, wherein the changes and chances of mortality shall be no more.

THE END.

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